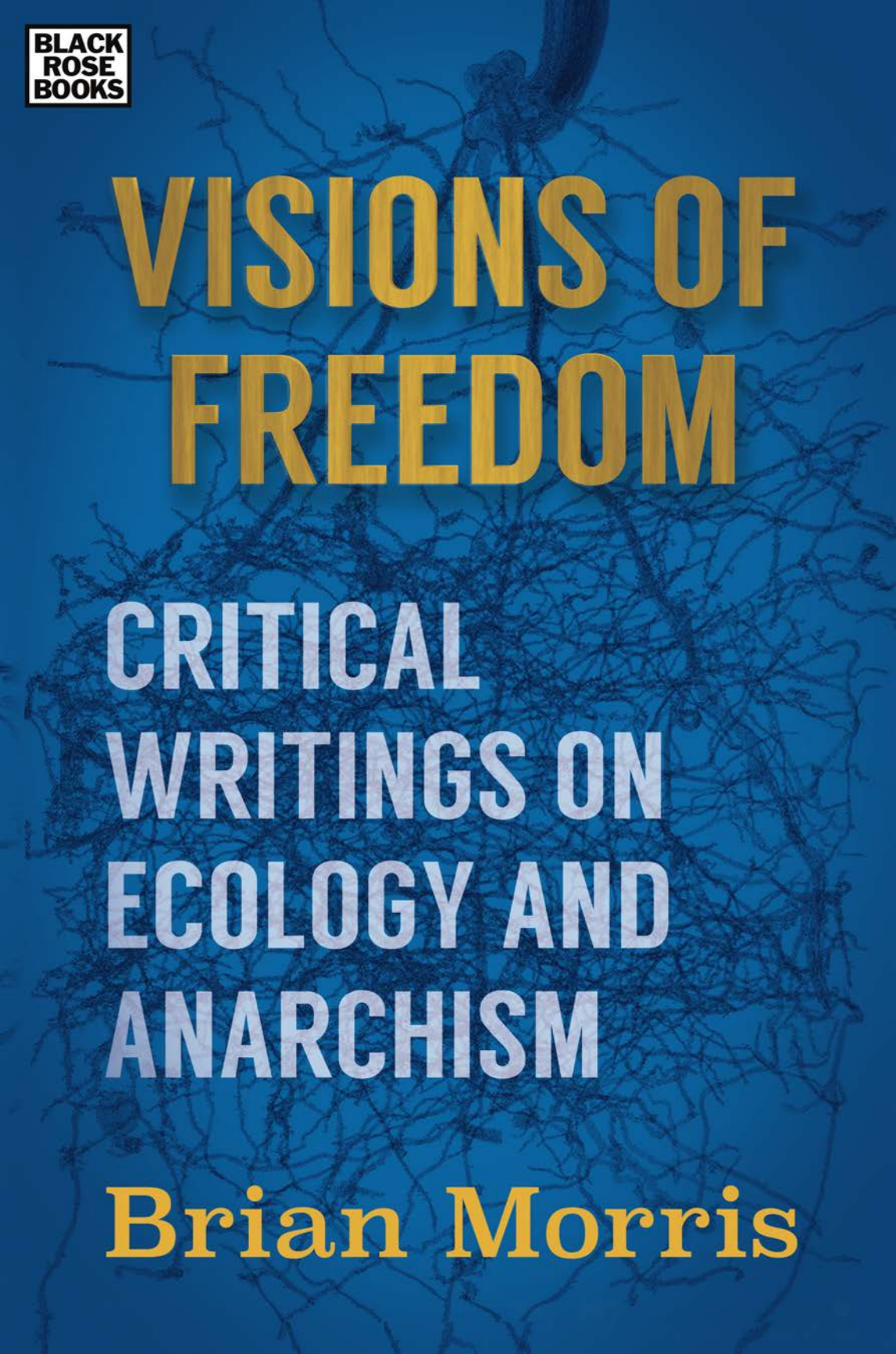
BLACK ROSE BOOKS
VISIONS OF FREEDOM
CRITICAL WRITINGS ON ECOLOGY AND ANARCHISM
Brian Morris

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CRITICAL WRITINGS ON ECOLOGY AND ANARCHISM

Brian Morris

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I am grateful to my family, friends and colleagues for their encouragement and support over many years and especially to Bill Gate who introduced me to anarchism some fifty years ago and Sheila Camfield for continued support.

INTRODUCTION

"Others have reproached me with my style.... They fear that
a page that is read without fatigue should not always
be an expression of truth. Were I to take their word for it,
we are profound only on condition of being obscure".

Jean-Henri Fabre
Souvenirs Entolomologiques

Throughout the Thatcher era and well beyond I have been defending, through books, articles, reviews and letters to *Freedom* and the *Green Anarchist*, the integrity, importance and contemporary relevance of an earlier generation of class-struggle anarchists—specifically defending and affirming the kind of libertarian socialism of the likes of Bakunin, Kropotkin, Reclus, Goldman, Malatesta and Rocker. For these social anarchists have been denigrated, dismissed, even ridiculed by not only liberal scholars and Marxists (as one would expect) but also by self-proclaimed anarchists, usually those enchanted by Christian mysticism, esotericism, sociobiology, primitivism and so-called "post" modernist/structuralist theory.

This present work is a sequel to my earlier collected essays *Ecology and Anarchism* (Images 1996) and consists of a collection of short essays, notes and reviews on a wide range of topics and issues relating to anarchism, ecology and contemporary politics. My critical reflections do indeed range over a wide spectrum of topics—but then I have always felt that variety is the spice of life!—But all the issues and books that I review have relevance to the development of a truly ecological worldview (evolutionary naturalism) and to the promotion and enhancement of social anarchism as a radical form of politics. For as I long ago emphasized (along with Bookchin, Marshall and others) in an era when corporate capitalism reigns virtually triumphant, creating conditions that induce fear, social dislocation, gross economic inequalities and poverty, and political and ecological crises, social anarchism offers the only viable political alternative to democratic liberalism, Marxism, global governance and religious autocracy. Moreover, Bakunin's and Kropotkin's social anarchism, based on a philosophy of evolutionary naturalism (which I defend) forms the only political tradition that truly complements an ecological sensibility, hence my critiques of the various forms of so-called spiritual ecology (eco-mysticism), which tend, rather misleadingly, to equate ecology with theology.

As in all my writings I have attempted in these notes and reviews to present my ideas as lucidly as possible, eschewing the obscurantism that is often cultivated

in the groves of academia, particularly among those of "post" modernist persuasions, who seem to confound obscurity with profundity. I have also tried to follow the approach that the radical liberal Bertrand Russell advocated with respect to philosophy, namely that the right approach is neither one of uncritical reverence, nor of contempt, but rather an attitude of critical sympathy. The notes and reviews below are therefore free of scholastic, Neo-Baroque jargon, but they do aim to be stimulating, informative, critically engaging, and above all, readable.

Brian Morris

■ CLR JAMES, 1909-1989

Originally published in *Freedom* (1993)

In early June I was deeply saddened by the passing away of two remarkable men—both of whom were in their eighties. One was my dad, a barely literate foundry worker who sweated and toiled around fifty hours a week, fifty weeks of the year, for over fifty years. He'll get no obituary. He simply heaped his treasures in the hearts of his family and friends—restricted to those who played dominoes, drank beer and kept pigeons. The other was C.L.R. James, a Caribbean intellectual who was one of the most cultured, literate and creative Marxists of the last half century—a truly world historical figure.

It would be difficult to think of two men as different as C.L.R. James and my dad. James was a black intellectual, cultured and cosmopolitan; my dad, white, working class, uncultured, a bloke whose body and spirit hardly left the Black Country. But they had I think one thing in common—a kind of instinctive, unarticulated anarchism. My dad would not have understood what the term meant, but he hated 'gaffers' and had a deep seated antipathy towards all forms of authority. C.L.R. James never claimed to be an anarchist but his writings and life are infused with a libertarian tendency, and his passing surely deserves some mention in the pages of *Freedom*.

James was born and educated in Trinidad. His father was a schoolteacher, his mother an avid reader, and he had an elite education at the island's premier institute—The Queen Royal College. He learned Latin, Greek and French, and developed a passionate interest in European culture, particularly English literature. Thackeray and Shakespeare were his favourites. He thought Shakespeare the most profound political thinker in the English language. But from his earliest years James had an acute awareness of the realities of the colonial situation—its sociological inequalities, the racial discrimination, and the poverty of the working people. His ambition was to become a writer, and his earliest works were a number of short stories and philosophical essays, and a biography of an early West Indian nationalist, Captain Cipriani.

In 1932 James came to Britain, and joined the cricketer Learie Constantine who was then living in Nelson. In the heart of industrial Lancashire, the town had a reputation for political radicalism and James soon joined the Independent Labour Party. He became interested in Trotsky's writings and joined a Marxist discussion group, eventually helping to form the Trotskyist Revolutionary Socialist League. At the same time he became deeply involved in the anti-colonial struggles. He chaired the International African Friends of Abyssinia, strongly opposing the Italian invasion of the country—though he was not oblivious to the feudal and reactionary aspects of Haile Selassie's rule. At that time many socialists supported Mussolini. James also immersed himself in the Pan-African movement, editing *International African Opinion*, the journal of the International African Service Bureau which had been founded by his boyhood friend George Padmore. Through this organisation James came to know and support

such African nationalists as Jomo Kenyatta and Kwame Nkrumah. During this period James supported himself as cricket correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*—cricket being another of James' lifelong passions. Stuart Hall described him as a "walking wisdom". At this period too, James published some of his most important workers—his classic study of the San Domingo revolution *The Black Jacobins* (1938), an important critique of Stalinism *World Revolution 1917-1936* (1937), *A History of Negro Revolt* (1938)—which indicates James' commitment to both socialism and African national independence—as well as a novel about West Indian barrack-yard life *Minty Alley* (1936).

In 1938, at the invitation of James Cannon of the American Socialist Workers Party, James immigrated to the United States. The following year he visited Trotsky, then in exile in Mexico. Although deeply impressed by Trotsky, James was critical of many of Trotsky's basic ideas, contrasting him unfavourably with Lenin. Trotsky, he felt, in spite of his opposition to Stalinist bureaucracy, was at heart always an administrator, a bureaucrat, unable to fully sense the creative power of the working class. During his fifteen years in the United States, James' political activities were centred around an autonomous group mostly in Detroit, which included such figures as Grace Lee and Raya Dunayevskaya. James was actively engaged in the sharecroppers' strikes in Missouri and agitated among black workers to oppose the Second World War, stressing the need for an autonomous black workers movement. James was attempting to delineate a form of Marxism that incorporated black struggles and which stressed that the agency of transformation could not be the "party" but only the mass of the working people. James' political ideas of this period are expressed in *State Capitalism and World Revolution* (1950) and *Notes on Dialectics* (1948), a study of Hegel, Marx and Lenin. In 1952 James was arrested and interned on Ellis Island—allegedly for "Anti-American activities". During his internment he wrote a study of Herman Melville, whose novel *Moby Dick* seemed to James to encapsulate the essence of American culture. The following year he returned to Britain.

In the last years of his life James travelled widely through three continents—Africa, Europe and America. He lectured and wrote books and articles on a wide variety of subjects—history, politics, literature, art and cricket. Though a truly renaissance figure with wide erudition and a searching intellect, James was free of obscurantism and intellectual pretension, and he wrote and spoke, whether on Thackeray or the labour theory of value, on Shakespeare's sonnets or Black Nationalism, with a style that was simple and lucid and essentially communicative. In 1981 he moved to Brixton and in his last years his room seems to have been a place of pilgrimage for a host of friends and visitors, especially young black people. He had, it seems, a spirit of generosity that was quite unique, and he never lost his quiet but passionate optimism and his belief, as a revolutionary socialist, that working people had the creative potential to emancipate themselves, and so rid the world of discrimination, poverty and exploitation. In this decade of intellectual pessimism and a historic nihilism he was like a breath of fresh air.

C.L.R. James was a Marxist, not an anarchist. He never claimed to be an anarchist, and you can search through his voluminous writings and not find any mention at all of anarchists—although he does describe Kropotkin's book on the French Revolution as the best general book in English on a revolution. Given his Trotskyist background, anarchism seems to be a cultural blind spot in James' political theory. Nevertheless there are two aspects of James' Marxism that bring him close to anarchism.

One is his trenchant and important criticism of Stalinism, or what many anarchists would deem to have been the inevitable outcome of orthodox Bolshevism. James looked upon the Soviet system as a system of state capitalism, stressing that in the control of the productive process through rational planning and coercion there was little to choose between the bourgeoisie and the Russian state bureaucrats. The factory regime instituted by Ford in the United States was, he suggested, the prototype of production relations in both fascist Germany and Stalinist Russia. "State property and total planning", he wrote, "are nothing else but the complete sub-ordination of the proletariat to capital"—and thus the Soviet system under Stalin was essentially a totalitarian system. James is equally perceptive in his account of how the Stalinist strategy in China, in its support of Chiang Kai-Shek and the bourgeoisie completely sabotaged the 1925-1927 Chinese revolution. But James seems to be completely ignorant of the fact that the depiction of the Soviet system as a form of "state capitalism" and as a despotic and totalitarian regime had been voiced and outlined long ago by Berkman and other anarchists in the immediate aftermath of the revolution— and had even been anticipated by Bakunin in the nineteenth century in his critique of Marx. "The Russians have nationalised, collectivised, and they plan. The result is the greatest tyranny known to history". Anarchists might agree, but rather than seeing this as some kind of "aberration" or the "degeneration" of the ideas of Marx and Lenin they see this kind of state capitalism as inherent in the Marxists' conception of the future "state".

The other important aspect of James' political theory which links him to anarchism is his repudiation of the concept of the vanguard party. For someone who continually heaped praise on Lenin—James always spoke of himself as someone extending the heritage of Marx and Engels—it does seem strange that he rejected what was the most significant aspect of this heritage, namely the idea of a revolutionary party who would lead the proletariat in the revolution and "seize" or "capture" state power. James was highly critical of this idea, and his book *Facing Reality* (1958), published in Detroit in the aftermath of the Hungarian revolution, has a distinctly anarchist flavour. Paul Berman suggests that the "anti-state proletarianism" expressed in the book has a "Bakuninist resonance". Some extracts from the book will suffice to indicate the tenor of James' ideas.

"The whole world today lives in the shadow of state power.... This state power is an ever-present self-perpetuating body over and above society. It transforms the human personality into a mass of economic needs to be satisfied by

decimal points of economic progress. It robs everyone of initiative and clogs the free development of society. This state power, by whatever name it is called, one-party state or welfare state, destroys all pretence of government *by* the people *of* the people. All that remains is government *for* the people".

Working people the world over, James goes on to write, were rebelling against the "monster". And the Hungarian revolution of 1956 indicated that a revolution could take place without the seizure of political power, and without the need for a revolutionary party.

James wrote: "One of the greatest achievements of the Hungarian revolution was to destroy once and for all the legend that the working class cannot act successfully except under the leadership of a political party. It did all that it did precisely because it was not under the leadership of a political party. If a political party had existed to lead the revolution, the political party would have led the revolution to disaster..."

The establishment of workers' councils in Hungary, James argued, "put an end to the foolish dreams, disasters and despair which have attended all those who, since 1923, have placed the hope for socialism in the elite party, whether communist or social-democrat. The political party... constitutes essentially a separation of the organising intellectuals and workers with an instinct for leadership, from the masses as force and motive power." For James, therefore, a genuine revolution could only come from the spontaneous creativity of the working class itself, and he sensed, like Bakunin long ago, that a vanguard party would inevitably substitute itself for the working class and establish despotism, but James misleadingly sees "a society based on workers councils" as reflecting the strategy of Marx and Lenin, and fails to understand that "Stalinism" did not begin in 1923 with Stalin but is inherent in Marxism itself and began with the Bolshevik assumption of state power in October 1917. The "legend" *is* orthodox Marxism.

Paul Berman suggests that James forcefully condemned anarchism in all his writings, and that *Facing Reality* represents an improvement on anarchism. Anarchism, Berman felt, lacked any focus on the industrial proletariat or any substantive method of analysis—something which James provides. None of this really holds water. James hardly engaged himself with anarchist thought, and consequently in his critique of Stalinism and orthodox Marxism and his advocacy of workers self-management, he simply replicates what anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists have long argued—namely, to quote Bakunin, that the emancipation of the working class is the task of the workers themselves.

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C.L.R. James, *The Future in the Presence* (1977), *Spheres of Existence* (1980), *At the Rendezvous of Victory* (1984), Allison & Busby.

■ BOOKS ABOUT GREENS

Originally published in *Freedom* (1989)

Seeing Green
Jonathon Porritt
Blackwell (1984)

The Coming of the Greens
Jonathon Porritt and David Winner
Fontana (1988)

Green Politics
Charlene Spretnak and Fritjof Capra
Paladin (1984)

It is an occupational hazard among intellectuals, regardless of their politics, to lose touch with the realities of everyday life. Intellectuals are also prone to look upon themselves as "originals", and to assume or to kid themselves that their own ideas are new and original. Often they expound such thought with prophetic fervour. Hegel, Marx and Freud were all intellectuals. In a modest way so too are those two doyens of the Green Party, Fritjof Capra and Jonathon Porritt—although hardly of the same intellectual calibre as the aforementioned triumvirate. For in their recent accounts of "Green Politics" both Capra and Porritt write about holistic philosophy, about ecology, about participatory democracy and decentralised politics, and about feminism and anti-militarism as if all these were something new. The Green Party, we are led to believe, has introduced us to "a new vision of reality" and has given us an entirely new dimension to politics. As an "anti-party Party" (whatever that is) it seeks to be the "political voice" for all the various "citizens" movements which have recently emerged—feminism, the peace and anti-nuclear campaigns, the ecology movement, animals rights, and the development movement. The Green Party it is suggested is the "conduit" between these movements and the state, situated neither to the Right nor to the Left, but somewhere in the "front" (haven't there been other parties claiming to do just this—up front?). The Party calls for an ecologically sustainable, decentralised and equitable economic system—a co-operative world order. The vision is commendable and all three texts are readable, engaging and comprehensive, and well worth reading. Together they provide us with a manifesto of Green politics. There are, however, some serious limitations to the kind of viewpoint that Porritt, Capra and Spretnak seek to propagate.

One is that they suffer, like other members of the Green Party, from a kind of myopia and seem to imply that until dear old Schumacher arrived on the scene nobody had ever discussed the social and ecological costs of industrial capitalism. That Murray Bookchin was reporting in detail on the environmental and health costs of pesticides, food additives, chemicalised agriculture, urbanisation

and nuclear energy in the early 1960s and that anarchist writers from Proudhon onwards have been critical of large-scale industry, seems largely to have gone unnoticed by the 'greens'. Critiques of the Mechanistic philosophy of the Enlightenment, along with its dualistic metaphysic, are of course nothing new. They predate even Proudhon. Capra's suggestion that "holistic" philosophy is a "new paradigm" indicates a woeful ignorance of the Western intellectual tradition, which ever since Hegel and Darwin has been in the process of dispensing with the mechanistic paradigm. A "new dialogue" with nature emerged with the discoveries of evolutionary biology and thermodynamics in the 19th century, and this was given philosophical expression in the writings of Dewey, Smuts, Whitehead and Mead more than fifty years ago. Process philosophy and 'holism' indeed is implicit not only in the writings of Reclus and Kropotkin and the early naturalists, but also in the work of Humboldt whose pioneering study *Cosmos* appeared in the middle of the last century.

Secondly, and linked with this myopia and lack of any historical sense, both Capra and Porritt seem to think—like Skolimowski and Roszak before them that "green politics" is simply a rediscovery of "old wisdom". It's nothing of the sort. It is quite erroneous to equate ecology (and the libertarian socialism that accompanies it) with the visions of Black Elk, or with the religious tenets of Buddhism, Christianity, Gnosticism or Hinduism. Although the philosophy of Lao Tze and tribal religions generally express a cosmological attitude which implies a sense of "oneness", "equality" and "reciprocity" between humans and nature, these are quite different from the hierarchic and mystical cosmologies of the other religious systems, which are profoundly anti-ecological. Porritt pleads that he does not want to sound too mystical, and that there is a need "to re-assert the unity of humankind and nature without necessarily relying in quasi-religious concepts"—a sentiment echoing my own published thoughts. But he can't help offering a sustained diatribe against materialism (falsely equated with the productivists' perspective of the Enlightenment) and pleads for "spiritual commitment" and for the acceptance of some kind of "supernatural" or "mystical" dimension to life. "Supernatural", "spiritual"—the very terms express an antipathy to the organic naturalistic perspective of ecology. Porritt appears to see nothing between gross bourgeois materialism of the narrowest kind, writing as if Darwin had never been born, and "ye anciente mysticism". The choice we are presented with is that between mechanism and mysticism. The aesthetic and scientific perspective of *real* ecology is neither: the relationship between humans and nature is neither one of opposition and dominion nor one of spiritual unity, but rather it is organic and symbiotic. Porritt would do well to read the writings of Bookchin more closely—though perhaps with a little more critical insight than he has applied to Capra and Schumacher—for they will offer him a dialectical philosophy that is more in tune with the science of ecology than are the religious musings of Schumacher, Skolimowski and Roszak, who are all looking for some religion to replace moribund Christianity. (Bookchin's thoughts on so-called "deep ecology" were clearly expressed in a recent issue of *The Raven*

(1/3).) Spretnak and Capra are even more religiously inclined than Porritt. They bewail the 'spiritual impoverishment' of contemporary societies, and like many eco-feminists hark back to the myth of Gaia or to the pre-Christian mother-goddess cults. That such cults still flourish in India and historically are intrinsically associated with agrarian theocratic states—thus co-existing as ideologies with both slavery and patriarchy—is hardly mentioned let alone explored. Our "oneness" with the natural world can be felt and accepted without recourse to some transcendental "spirit", however conceptualised.

Finally, none of these writers seems able to extricate themselves from the party political system. They all have the liberal reformist view that the state is some kind of neutral debating society which makes decisions for the benefit of all. It thus simply needs opening-up to the views of the Greens at the "grass-roots". It will then pass legislation to curb the awful social and environmental effects of the present system. It is of course not like this. The state consists of repressive institutions—both ideological and coercive—whose primary purpose is to support and protect the owners of capital and the capitalist system more generally. Whenever this is under threat, as in the miners' strike, its true function becomes all too apparent. Most of the major decisions that effect our lives—the deployment of missiles or the investment of the wealth that the working people generate—take place outside the halls of Westminster. Parliament simply acts as a sounding board, serving to legitimate class rule. Although the three books are all supposedly concerned with the "*politics* of ecology" there is very little real political analysis in any of them. There is, believe it or not, no discussion at all of capitalism, economic imperialism—the maraudings of the Pentagon in its support of American capital gets no mention—or of state repression. What discussion there is, on "green economics", is rather confused and vacillating, for the Greens are clearly unable to decide whether or not to support "private property". There are two problems. One is their tendency to equate industrialism and capitalism (as if the latter were simply some form of technology) or to see industrialism as the villain of the piece. But most of the ecological and social problems of the Third World have little to do with industry per se—they may relate to sweat shops or bonded agricultural labour—they have everything to do with a capitalist system which is geared to profits and which is inherently exploitative at the periphery. Third World poverty, political repression and racism, and human exploitation are hardly discussed in any of the books. Porritt and Winner discuss "development" but seem to see this is terms of charity organisations like Oxfam and aid programmes. The social and ecological implications of the Third World being a "net exporter of capital" (what a way to describe exploitation) is broached but never explored, and there is an avoidance of any real analysis of the economic system—capitalism—that is primarily responsible for *both* the widespread poverty and starvation in the world and the spread of environmental destruction.

The other problem is that these "Green" intellectuals have no clear conception of a socialist alternative to capitalism. This is because they go along with

the ideologues and apologists of capitalism in equating socialism with Marxism and state socialism or with the system of state capitalism found in the Soviet Union. Porritt even describes the Labour Party as the "heartland of socialism!" Porritt in his earlier book acknowledged that the 'true greens' were those radical libertarian environmentalists who were the heirs to the anarchist tradition of Kropotkin, Thoreau and Godwin, and still accepts that there is a "green line" within the socialist tradition. But other than this a form of collective amnesia has descended over the Green Party who simply fail to acknowledge the existence of an anarchist or libertarian socialist tradition which long ago articulated some of the basic principles that now guide the Green Party. But the anarchists realised that a society that was "ecological, decentralized, equitable, and comprised of flexible institutions, one in which people have significant control over their lives"—to quote from one of the books—must necessarily be a socialist one, and without state institutions. But having adopted anarchist principles in their theoretical vision, in practice the Greens advocate party politics. Porritt accuses Michael Allaby of writing "humbug" when the latter writer suggests that ecologists should not be concerned with power, and reckons that all anarchists are living in an unreal world. Porritt the realist—and on television a keen supporter of the monarchy—suggests paradoxically that the Greens only seek power in order to relinquish it, and get involved in national politics because they don't believe in it—elections having only an educative or propaganda value. It's all very strange. But then it's equally paradoxical that someone who argues that everyone should be empowered to determine the course of his or her own life should suggest also that the coming revolution to the post-industrial age will be ushered in for us by a middle-class elite—none other than the Green Party itself. No doubt it will whittle away, like the state of the authoritarian Marxists, in due time. We all know what happens to such parties when they get into power. All the intellectuals too. Porritt dedicates his latest study (co-authored with Winner)—"To all those who have the influence, and who know how to use it wisely for the future." Enough said.

It would appear that great efforts are being made by people like Porritt and Capra to hinge the ecology movement to reformist politics. This is in keeping with the aims of Schumacher, whose politics were essentially those of a radical liberal. For what he advocated was a balance and harmony between management and workers, and the need for political policies that would sustain and preserve those "non-economic values" (his phrase) debased by capitalism. Nowhere does he ever suggest that we should put an end to the system that fosters the nuclear weaponry that creates the pollution, that "ravishes nature" and "mutilates man" (his phrase). Rather he pleads only for the re-affirmation of religious values to counter-balance the effects of the capitalist system. The Green Party is the political expression of Schumacher's vision: it hardly presents a challenge let along a threat to capitalism or to the state structures which support it.

■ THE IGNOBLE ART

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I have a very ambivalent attitude towards boxing. It was very much a part of my life as a kid. I remember listening on the radio to the Randolph Turpin versus Sugar Ray Robinson middleweight bout in 1951, and joined my family in the excitement and delight with the result. The whole country in fact, as I dimly remember the event, registered an emotional outburst of patriotic pride. It seems quite odd in retrospect. At school almost every PT lesson concluded with a boxing session, 'putting on the gloves', and encouraged by my peers I once exchanged blows with a classmate. My Uncle Jack had a friend who ran Charlemont Boxing Club in West Bromwich, and keen that my cousin and close friend Terry should learn "how to stand up for himself", he was made to join the club. And I went along, but Terry hated it, so he and I used to 'spar' together most of the time without really coming to blows—or just skip with a rope. Ever since skipping has seemed to me to be intrinsically linked with boxing. Terry was a Christian and had become a pacifist; he said he was against war and boxing. To me, then, working in a local foundry and hardly literate, the idea seemed quite incredulous. My mother said Terry was just 'silly'. However, I had long discussions with him about boxing, and eventually came round to thinking that there was not much to commend it as a sport.

But the real jolt in my thoughts about boxing came when I read Edith Summerskill's little book *The Ignoble Art*, published in 1956. Summerskill, bless her memory, was a Labour MP who in the late 1950s gained notoriety, as well as much ill-deserved abuse and ridicule, by suggesting that boxing was a brutal sport that resulted in brain damage to the participants and fostered unhealthy aggressive impulses among onlookers, and should therefore be proscribed. In fact in 1960 she tried to introduce a bill prohibiting boxing, but it was defeated—though it generated a good deal of discussion and emotion, and gave sports writers like Peter Wilson a good deal to think about. Summerskill's arguments were ignored or derided by her contemporaries, and she found little support from the British Medical Association (BMA) who are now, thirty years later, campaigning against the sport. But I took her arguments very much to heart. I did not agree with legally proscribing it as a sport (any more than I would proscribe smoking or suicide), but I did agree with the sentiments she expressed; boxing was brutal, sadistic and degrading, it was deleterious to the long term health of the boxers, and it was best discouraged as a sport. It seemed to be a lingering remnant of the kind of violent spectacles one associates with ancient Rome. Yet looking back over the past three decades, I am surprised by two things. Firstly, though I long ago concluded that boxing was an ignoble sport, I continually feel drawn towards it. Should it appear on television I have consciously and deliberately to stop myself watching it—even though repulsed by it. And I find this strange. It says something about one's early conditioning. Secondly, I had the feeling that boxing as a sporting activity would go into

decline and eventually cease to have currency in the contemporary world, but this has not happened. Prize fights, as they are called, still fill our television screens and newspaper headlines and men like Henry Cooper and Frank Bruno—both kind of folk heroes—continue to give boxing a respectable uplift. Around a decade ago, with the tragic death of a young Welsh boxer, Johnny Owen, questions were raised about the validity of boxing as cultural activity. But the general response then, as now, was re-affirmation of its value. As one reporter put it: Owen "lived for his sport—and died for it", implying that boxing was something worth dying for. The general tenet of the obituaries of that, 'shy hero' were therefore an oblique defence of the so-called noble art of self-defence. And now the same scenario repeats itself. While Michael Watson lies critically ill from severe head injuries—literally fighting for his life—a Tory minister has the gall to commend boxing as a sport for young boys. It gives them the opportunity to make good in the world, teaches them 'manliness', and he remarks, is not really dangerous. Such thoughts are worth commenting upon.

First, there is the continued affirmation of specific cultural attributes—the values that make boxing into a 'manly' sport—the same 'male' virtues that Summerskill argued were to be deplored rather than encouraged. Thus obituaries to Johnny Owen stressed his dedication to boxing, that he lived for 'competition', and that he "smiled at the prospect of getting hurt". He was used as an apt symbol for an aggressive, individualistic culture, the hero of a sport that makes a virtue of violence. When Summerskill stressed that boxing, unlike other sports, had the primary aim of hurting an opponent and rendering him insensible, she was ridiculed by boxing commentators who stressed it was the skill of scoring points. They tended to down-play the fact that if a person got knocked out scoring would cease and the fight be terminated.

Then secondly, there is the continuous emphasis that boxing is not a dangerous sport. Although discussions are now broached regarding head guards, shorter fights, and more medical supervision, it is often stressed that boxing has "a very low rate of serious or fatal accidents" and is much less dangerous than football, cricket and motor racing. Summerskill's book met with the same response: boxing, given medical supervision, did not lead to serious harm, apart from the accidental injuries that may happen in any sport. Importantly, these statements tend to come from either boxing officials or medical officers associated with various boxing organisations—rather than the boxers themselves—although at long last the BMA has eventually come round to accepting what Summerskill was saying without medical back-up thirty years ago. Deaths from championship bouts—which are the ones that get publicity—seem to occur at regular intervals. Some three decades ago the world welterweight champion Benny Paret, an illiterate Cuba émigré died after losing the title to Emil Griffith. A year later Davey Moore was fatally injured after being knocked down by Sugar Ramos—prompting Pete Seeger to write the song 'Who Killed Davy Moore'. A decade ago Angelo Jacopucci died from brain injuries after losing the European middleweight title to another British folk hero, Alan Minter.

Minter was so disturbed by this that he seriously thought of giving up boxing—but didn't. After this fight *The Guardian* published a perceptive leader (25th July 1978) suggesting that the manly art of self-defence was often the grubby art of self-destruction, that perhaps the time had come when it should be proscribed. Two years later Johnny Owen died. And Muhammad Ali's Parkinson's disease—the symptoms of which are frequently found in the punch-drunk syndrome—is of course directly related to the brain damage that he suffered in many of his gruelling bouts. Of course fatal injuries occur in other sports, but as Edith Summerskill tried to stress with boxing, these fatalities are different because boxing intrinsically inflects pain and injury. Boxing is the only sport, she wrote, "in which a participant seeks to knock his opponent out.... [and] in which wounds inflicted and blood drawn give colour, zest and a sadistic thrill to the whole performance".

But Summerskill lay stress—and tried to provide impartial evidence—not on boxing fatalities, but on the severe damage to the brain that blows to the head would entail. As she wrote: "this sensitive organ cannot possibly fail to be damaged following the impact of a succession of blows over years". She noted the contrasting performances of boxers like Randolph Turpin who, after a brilliant early career, had received a severe beating about the head. Thereafter his co-ordination and timing went completely amiss, and he lost to mediocre fighters. How Turpin himself described these events, as well as his tragic life—he committed suicide at the age of 36—is a terrible indictment of boxing. So is the life of the 'Brown Bomber', as he was called, the popular heavyweight Joe Lewis. For suggesting that boxers might be mentally impaired through head injuries, Summerskill was criticised and derided by doctors and by the boxing fraternity. In an age of brain scans and the like we now know that Summerskill's arguments are compellingly valid, yet what is most interesting is that one finds confirmation of Summerskill's assumptions in the memoirs of one of her foremost critics, the broadcaster Barrington Dalby.

When I was a lad he was famous for his 'between rounds' commentary, and his autobiography was entitled *Come in Barry* (1961).

For example, in recounting the famous and 'epic' lightweight championship fight between Boon and Danahar in 1939, which he refereed, Dalby recalls and pays tribute to the skill, the tenacity, the courage and the stamina that each of these men exhibited—and the suffering both endured. Danahar in particular, in the latter part of the contest, took a severe beating, taking "three counts of nine" in the 13th round. In the next round Dalby stopped the fight to save Danahar, who was in an extremely distressed condition, from taking further punishment. What prompted him to do this, Dalby tells us in his memoirs, was the vision of another boxer, one Curly Watson, who some years before had died of brain haemorrhage after being knocked down in a bout. But the most significant sentence in this account read as follows: "Following the contest, Eric Boon gave Danahar a silver cigarette box as a token of his esteem—a perfect ending to a perfect fight—but, alas, *neither boxer was ever quite the same again*".

Paul Goodman somewhere wrote that the ideas of radical thinkers are often criticised as being utopian or unrealistic, in that they are thought to have a rather benign view of human nature. Let's face it, the counter-argument goes: humans are by nature violent, aggressive and 'bestial'—and so human institutions should recognise this fact. But Goodman suggested that the real issue is not whether people are by nature either good (as Rousseau believed) or infused with 'original sin' (and a kind of 'killer ape', as ethnologists and socio-biologists have described us), nor is it a question of whether people are 'good enough' for a particular kind of society, but rather the real moral issue is whether social institutions are conducive to the development of the kind of values that people think worthwhile and wholesome—like peace, fraternity, physical and mental well-being, autonomy and freedom. Clearly boxing is not conducive to these aims—on the contrary. And this is why it should be actively discouraged. This indeed was Edith Summerskill's main charge against boxing: namely, that if we wanted to lay the foundations of peace and of a co-operative society, it just did not help to glorify boxing, and she felt that we should do nothing to encourage our destructive and sadistic impulses. A correspondent to *The Green Anarchist* has recently advocated boxing as an appropriate pastime for "anarchists and hippies"—to build up our strength and self-confidence, and to provide us with 'fun'. The correspondent, Samson by name, has a point, but as should be clear from what has been written above, I do not think there is much 'fun' in boxing, that it engenders 'macho' values that we should not encourage, and that there are surely other ways of developing such 'virtues' as courage, physical fitness and self-confidence. My cousin Terry, with whom I began these reflections, hated boxing and was one of the most gentle people I have ever come across. He was also one of the most courageous and self-confident. Sad it was that he got killed down Hampstead pit aged just 21.

■ TOWARDS A TRANSPERSONAL ECOLOGY

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Towards a Transpersonal Ecology
Warwick Fox, (Boston, Shambala, 1990)

'The personal is political' was an important slogan some years ago. Prompted by the feminist movement, it suggested that we should strive to bring about some unity between our personal lives and our political commitments. It was a slogan that most anarchists agreed with. However, in recent years its meaning seems to have shifted somewhat. Instead of implying a unity between the personal and political action, Gandhian fashion, it now seems to suggest that the personal *is* the political. Thus some new age enthusiast has affirmed that we can best oppose the apartheid system in South Africa not by political action but by simple mediating, sending down to South Africa our positive spiritual vibes. With the advent of 'New Ageism' politics is now being 'psychologised' and 'spiritualised'. We are currently experiencing a resurgence of interest in spirit cults and occultism—an interest that eclectically blends Sufism, Buddhism (in all its varieties), Christian mysticism, Gnosticism, theosophy, Hinduism, quantum physics and systems theory in a curious and spurious mush. Significantly this 'spiritual' revival is taking place at a time when our personal lives are being increasingly controlled by state 'experts' and by the imperatives of capitalism. While we are being told to pray, to mediate, to get in touch with the goddess, or to expand the self so that it will be in harmony with the living earth (spiritualised as Gaia) so our individual freedoms are being steadily eroded and the whole of social life commodified. A whole battery of experts, 'engineers of the human soul' (as Nikolas Rose calls them) has been foisted upon us, and social and political power has entered into our very being. The two processes are, of course, intrinsically connected, and support and feed off each other.

That 'spirituality' and 'psychologism' inherent in New Ageism has had a baneful influence on ecology has long been recognized. Over the past decade Murray Bookchin has constantly 'berated the tendency for green politics to be defined in terms of therapy, life-styles and religious ritual. And the influence of New Ageism is very apparent in Warwick Fox's interesting and important book on deep ecology. Fox is an Australian academic, and his book is essentially concerned with outlining and advocating the kind of eco-philosophy that stems from Arne Naess. It is thus a primer in deep ecology—as a philosophy—which Fox is anxious to rename 'transpersonal ecology'.

The deep ecologists, as Fox seems to define them, are a group of philosophers, therapists and 'venerable teachers' who form a kind of fraternity. They regularly meet up at conferences, either on elite university campuses across the world or in some pleasant mountain retreat, to exchange ideas. They produce philosophical texts and journals like *Environmental Ethics* which support and propagate each other's work. So the cover of this book is adorned with laudatory

comments by Roger Walsh, Alan Drengson, George Sessions and Bill Devall, all of which describe the book in glowing terms—"a pioneering work .... A beautifully organised, coherent and lucid book that will facilitate healing ourselves, and our communities and our relationships with nature ... destined to be a classic in the field"—while in the text itself Fox spends a lot of pages, with ample quotation, outlining and commending the work of these same writers, all of whom are seen as the genuine deep ecologists.

The first part of the book gives a short but useful critique of athropocentrism, the idea that humans have dominion over the world, and that nature is simply a resource for human use. Fox introduces and discusses the various typologies that have long been articulated in the ecology movement, between environmentalists and social ecology (Bookchin), between technocentrism and ecocentricism (O'Riordon) and between shallow and deep ecology (Naess and the deep ecologists).

In Part Two Fox asks the question as to why deep ecology has become so influential—in contrast to Bookchin's ideas which he suggests have been ignored by the academic philosophers. And he comes to the rather shallow conclusion that deep ecology has become influential because it has become the subject of critique and of interest to academic philosophers, and has been propagated with such commitment and fervour by such people as Devall, Sessions, Drengson, and of course himself, all members of the deep ecology fraternity. Fox makes no attempt to answer the question he poses in terms of social and political factors. With its spiritualist leanings and its focus on extending consciousness, deep ecology—like New Ageism—presents little threat to capitalism or to the state structures that support it. It is certainly less of a threat than Bookchin's social anarchism. Many deep ecologists, including Naess himself, have of course been prominent as political activists, but this political dimension is completely ignored by Fox, whose interests seem to be purely philosophical. That 'eco-warrior', and perhaps the most well-known of the deep ecologists, Dave Foreman, only gets three lines, then only to note that his publication *Earth First!* carries articles and reviews about deep ecology. Criticisms of deep ecology—which are political and not philosophical—by Bookchin and the eco-feminists Fox completely ignores in this text, simply referring the reader to articles in *Environmental Ethics*. His antipathy to Bookchin is quite pronounced. But his mode of responding to Bookchin's critique of deep ecology is both unscholarly and petty—quite out of tune with the general tenor of the book. He spends a whole paragraph on Bookchin's "vitriolic claims", citing the anarchist's strident and invective prose. And then ends with the word 'indeed'. Indeed! In the process of scoring such literary points he completely ignores of course the substance of Bookchin's critique of deep ecology. George Bradford's critique of deep ecology doesn't get a mention.

In Part Three Fox presents a good but dense account of Arne Naess's ecophilosophy. Fox writes as a philosopher and seems to be largely addressing his academic colleagues, but the account is nonetheless a useful one. He distinguishes

three senses in Naess's deep ecology—a formal sense which suggests that 'deep' means asking questions that go beyond the everyday, technical and scientific; a philosophical sense which is related to Naess's key concept of 'self-realisation'; and a popular sense which refers to the basic principles of the deep ecology movement. The discussion of Naess's philosophy is at times confusing as Fox tries to draw together—like Naess—what are essentially incompatible as ontologies (as theories of existence)—namely Buddhism, which denies the reality of self (whither self-realisation) and advocates detachment (not identification) with the world; Gandhi's religious affirmation of both theism (karma yoga) and theological absolutism (Advaita) which denies the reality of the world; animism (which is an imminent conception of spirit or deity; and Spinoza's pantheism. Spinoza of course was a this-worldly philosopher, and his so-called pantheism—god is nature—is essentially an atheistic doctrine. Fox's suggestion that it means god 'in nature' is quite misleading. As he (and Naess) wants to advocate a this-worldly conception of the self and its identification with nature, one wonders why on earth they should want to hold fast to all these defunct religious notions?

Part Four of the study is mainly for philosophers; in it Fox outlines quite lucidly the various ethical theories relating to the environment. He discusses three theories of instrumental value (unrestrained exploitation—which he interestingly links with the frontier spirit and not with capitalism—resource conservation and resource preservation) and four theories of intrinsic value, the notion that the non-human world has value in itself, irrespective of humans. He outlined these four theories in terms of ethical sentientism (Singer's plea for animal rights), biological or life-based ethics (Taylor, Capra), ecosystem ethics (Leopold, Lovelock), and cosmic purpose ethics (Skolimowski, Bookchin).

The conclusion that Fox comes to is that Naess's theory of deep ecology is a 'psychologically based approach' that has little to do with ethical theory. As Naess wrote: "I'm not much interested in ethics or morals, I'm interested in how we experience the world". It is a kind of 'way', like the Buddha advocated, but instead of involving detachment from the world it implies 'self-realisation', identification with the world of nature. It does not deny the existence of the personal sense of self, but suggests an expansion of this self through the identification (not identity, i.e. conflation) of the self with other forms of existence. Maslow is a key figure here, but self-realisation goes beyond the simple identification with the human species, extending to all the natural world. Fox stresses that self-realisation is a this-worldly path, and has little to do with the 'god-in-the-process-of-becoming' notion of the New Age and transpersonal theorists like Ken Wilbur. Quoting long extracts from the works of all the deep ecology fraternity, Fox argues that deep ecology implies these two basic characteristics—a rejection of any preoccupation with environmental ethics, and a stress on self-realisation—the cultivation of an ecological sensibility, and an awareness that we are an intrinsic part of nature. This implies an expansive sense of self. Why this should necessarily involve spiritual therapy under some guru, or communing with nature alone on some mountain top (or in some remote forest) as deep

ecologists seem to suggest—has never seemed too clear for me. For ecological sensibility, an awareness of the symbiotic or dialectical relationship we have with nature (in a convoluted discussion Fox writes about our relative autonomy) can surely be experienced by such everyday experiences as digging the allotment, taking the dog for a walk, and chatting with a neighbour. The self as ego is not existential but a function of capitalism. This focus on self-realisation thus has little to do with spirituality, and divorced from social and political engagement with the world—as it seems to be in Fox's writings—could well be counter-productive. And to imply—by leaving out completely socio-economic factors—that environmental problems are simply a function of anthropocentric ideas, tends only to divert attention away from examining those social and political institutions which are primarily responsible for the present ecological crisis. But to bring in capitalism and the state suggests a social awareness that seems to be lacking in Fox's style of philosophy.

■ A CRITIQUE OF ECOFEMINISM

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Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ecofeminist Politics
Janet Biehl, (Black Rose Books, 1991)

Written from the perspective of social ecology, this welcome book provides perhaps the first sustained critique of the religious mysticism that goes under the guise of ecofeminism. A decade ago, before Capra's *Tao of Physics*, topics like shamanism and 'organismic cosmologies' could only be encountered in abstruse anthropological or Jungian texts. Since then, of course, a plethora of ecofeminist writings have appeared, and all seem to be inextricably linked with the 'New Age' and the spiritualist revival now taking place. All have sought in various ways misleadingly to equate ecological and progressive thought—as well as quantum physics—with religious mysticism. The ideas they express, however, are anything but original, whether in terms of their critiques of mechanistic science and Cartesian dualism, or in their advocacy of tribal ritual or religious mysticism. Biehl's book provides us with a useful, well-written, and philosophically informed critique of the major proponents of the religiously inclined ecofeminism—Starhawk and Spretnak in particular. She offers important criticisms of their ideas, indicating in the process their anthropological naivety, their lack of intellectual coherence and irrational tendencies, their lack of any historical perspective, and the potential reactionary implications of their writings. Her critique is mainly contained in three key chapters, but throughout the book Biehl challenges the notion of the 'eternal feminine' and the metaphorical association of women with nature, the tendency to identify women with the earth, intuition, and the nurturing role. She points out that the ecofeminists have uncritically accepted symbolic associations that were in fact created by patriarchal and patricentric cultures.

Rewriting history

In the chapter on the 'neolithic mystique', Biehl examines literature on the cults of the mother goddess, especially that association with Gimbutas and Spretnak. She indicates the highly simplistic nature of their account of European history, and stressed that in cultures where goddess cults were prominent, like Minoan Crete and Egypt, they did not in any sense constitute a matricentric paradise; on the contrary, they were characterised by priestly and caste hierarchies, patriarchy, oppression, and even from the evidence, ritual sacrifice of human beings.

Biehl goes on to examine the notion encouraged and propagated by Starhawk and Merchant that the earth or nature as a whole is a living organism, and thus that the world is 'alive' or that the goddess (spirit) is imminent in the world. This cosmological or organismic conception of the world is as old as the hills and was characteristic of almost all pre-capitalist societies, including European society until the development of capitalism, as writers like Collingwood,

Whitehead, and Jonas long ago outlined. However these writers looked upon this world view from a historical perspective. They did not advocate it as a form of understanding or suggest that we return to it. Instead they sensed that a new paradigm had emerged which viewed the world neither as an organism nor as a machine, but as a kind of historical process.

Biehl's main argument is that both cosmological and mechanistic conceptions of the world have to be understood in their social and historical contexts and that the former conception (the 'imminence' of the divine) did not imply an egalitarian or an emancipatory ethic. To the contrary, such conceptions—whether Mesopotamian, Egyptian, or Medieval Christian—were inherently theocratic, and served to bolster oppression and hierarchy. The world, Biehl argues, is not a static cosmic order, and to suggest that nature is alive is as one-sided and reductionist as the Cartesian notion that nature is a 'dead' mechanism. Neither mysticism nor mechanism are valid approaches to the world as suggested in a long tradition that goes back to the nineteenth century. What is significant about Merchant, Biehl writes, is that she virtually ignored this tradition, one that offered the most profound challenge to mechanistic philosophy—the dialectical and developmental way of thought that emerged with Hegel and Darwin.

In another chapter, Biehl bewails the obscurantism and mysticism that is advocated by ecofeminists in their glorification of 'oneness' (the spiritual union with nature), archaic rituals and metaphorical thinking. Biehl does not deny the importance of fantasy, poetry, intuition, and metaphor as important aspects of human life and human subjectivity. But to advocate 'oneness' with the world through some patently nonexistent deity simply leads to the undermining, she suggests, of our rational and critical faculties. To 'think like a mountain' (which women are supposed to do, according to one ecofeminist) is, Biehl asserts, not to think at all. In an era when reason is being increasingly undermined by an irrational social reality and by the images of a consumer culture, this advocacy of religious mysticism becomes highly problematic. She points to the close association between fascist ideology and organic metaphors and anti-rationalist tendencies. In fact it is worth noting that the first critiques of the Enlightenment were made long ago by conservative and fascist thinkers in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Myth, Biehl argues, cannot be used to fight myth, and in challenging scientism and mechanistic thought we ought not to reject reason itself by simply advocating mysticism or tribal ritual.

The world as historical process

In the concluding chapters of the book Biehl offers an alternative philosophy of nature, as the basis of both ecological ethic and a democratic politics. What she outlines is the theory of dialectical naturalism, a variant of the kind of world view that has developed over the past century, and which has been presented by Murray Bookchin. It is a world view that combines Marxist historical materialism, Darwin's evolutionary biology and Hegel's dialectical philosophy. This approach views the cosmos not as a macro-organism endowed with spirit

(ecofeminists invariably equate life with spirit) nor as a mechanism, but as an historical process in which both life and human sociality (second nature) have dialectically emerged out of inorganic nature. This process is natural, there being no spiritual principle either within or without to explain its origin or development, and it is a process that is open-ended, spontaneous and free from predeterminations. Such an ecophilosphy has as its corollary an ecological society, one based on a community life that is free from hierarchy, oppression and exploitation. Following Bookchin, Biehl suggests the need in such societies to develop distinct fact-to-face democratic institutions, a political public sphere where community decisions are enacted. Biehl thus argues against the notion of 'consensus' decision-making advocated by some ecofeminists, suggesting that 'consensus' only works for small intimate groups and tends to foster passivity and compliance. Conflict of opinion, she feels, are not only inevitable in society, but desirable and healthy.

As with Bookchin, Biehl's writing style is polemical, strident, pithy, and at times highly dismissive of the ecofeminist writers she considers. The substance of her critique is, I think, a valid one, and is to be welcomed, given that many of the contributions to books like Judith Plant's *Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism* (1989)—like Starhawk, Spretnak, Reuther and others—seem to equate ecological thought with spiritualism in one of its varieties, albeit for feminists of a 'feminine kind'. But in focusing her criticisms on religious ecofeminists, Biehl seems to deny that there are any links between ecology and feminism, and that ecofeminism is by definition of the spiritualist goddess variety. A crucial aspect of Bookchin's work had been to link ecological degradation and the Prometheon ethic to social oppression and capitalism. And as Merchant and other feminists have argued the oppression of women and the domination of nature are intrinsically linked. Any ecology worthy of the name, like any anarchism worthy of the name, must therefore have a feminist dimension. By attacking the religious variety of ecofeminism, Biehl seems to deny any connection between feminism and ecology, or between the Prometheon ethic and masculinity—and that is a pity.

■ MARY DALY AND HER CRITICS

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In a study of feminism and post-structuralist theory Chris Weedon suggests that no feminist would subscribe to an essentialist theory that would explain social relations in terms of the 'natural' and thus deny history and the possibility of future change (1987, p. 4). By this criterion Mary Daly is not a feminist! Daly is a radical feminist and theologian whose study of *Gyn/Ecology* had an extraordinary impact when it first appeared a decade ago. She seems nowadays, apart from some critiques, to be ignored by many feminists. But although her theoretical ideas lack coherence and substance, Daly's study is an impassioned and important critique patriarchy, both of its ideology and the devastating effects it has had on the well-being of women. Her indictment of the brutalities involved in such historical phenomena as suttee (widow burning amongst Hindus), Chinese foot-binding, clitoridectomy among many African cultures, the witch craze in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and modern gynaecological practices are not seen in their historical context so much as exemplifications of the universal institution of patriarchy. And patriarchy is seen by Daly in an undifferentiated way as "the religion of the entire planet". It covers not only all the world religions—Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism and Islam—but the writings of all (seemingly without exception) male scholars—including Marx, Freud and Jung. She postulates a universal and fundamental male need (to protect themselves from anomie and from their own weakness, passivity and lack of creativity) and a universal fear (of women). Men, she argues, are simply filled with misogyny, lust (as a fixation on the genitals), envy, violence and necrophilic tendencies. The origin of these universal male attributes in never explained; they are simply seen as entering into all human societies and into all male actions and beliefs. Whereas the medieval Christian theologians in their misogyny associated women with the devil and evil, Daly seems to take a thoroughly misanthropic view seeing men as the 'enemy' and as incapable of any humane of positive thoughts or actions. That men have equally been subject to male violence seems to be beyond Daly's comprehension, for her perspective is essentially theological and Manichean. But Daly views patriarchy not only in terms of the physical brutality that women have had to contend with; she also examines with cogency its ideological functions. She shows how religious beliefs and cultural ideas about women have had a mystifying effect and have served to 'dismember' a woman's self, to 'bind' the mind or spirit of women, to present them as docile, domesticated, submissive, feminine, and enslaved. Patriarchy, Daly writes, appears everywhere and is even internalised by women "festering inside women's heads". This leads Daly, in rather elitist fashion to be extremely disparaging about women generally, who are described as "moronised", "robotised", "lobotomised" and as the "puppets of Papa". In Daly, as with some other feminists, the stress on the monolithic brutality and psychological pressure of male power has reduced women almost

to a state of 'non-persons', as so 'brainwashed' that they are scarcely human (Grimshaw, 1988, pp. 92-93).

In contrast to the essential nature of men, who are seen as inherently brutalising, violent and necrophilic, women are seen by Daly, as my own mother with irony would express it, as "all goodness and light". But though still following an essentialist perspective—which seems to conflate biology with a spiritual orientation—Daly makes a clear distinction between the victimised female self whose desires and actions, under the influence of patriarchy are not truly her own, and the authentic or true self. It is this self that radical feminism seeks to rediscover, and Daly is quite lyrical about both its attributes and the journey to the recreation of this "gynocentric be-ing". The Female Self is the "divine spark of being". It is the Hag, the Spinster or Witch that exists in every living woman. It is something that is "deep inside" a woman, the "self, in every woman". It is "female energy" and is essentially biophilic (life loving). It is expressed in the bond between mothers and daughters, and is the 'sisterhood' of radical feminists. It is the "original institution of integrity" and is creative, loving, bonding, life-enhancing, dynamic. This authentic self which is equated with both a "divine spark" and "life energy" is, it has to be noted, thoroughly female, and Daly expressed nothing but antipathy towards the notion of androgyny (1979, p. 68). Such radical feminism implies a lesbian lifestyle and separatism, and in Daly's vision of the future one finds it difficult to find a place for either men or children. Her later study, *Pure Lust* (1984), which is subtitled an 'elemental feminist philosophy', carries essentially the same message: men are inherently sadists driven by an insatiable desire to degrade and humiliate women; women, or at least the "race of lusty women", are concerned to rekindle their biophilic energies, the element force or be-ing that they alone possess. Daly thus seems to endorse the idea of the natural superiority of women. But as Alison Jagger (1983, p. 95) and other feminists have suggested, Daly nowhere provides a systematic account of just what are women's special powers, other than their capacity to give birth (which Daly sees as inessential to the development of self), nor of the relation of these powers to female biology.

Although in its critique of patriarchy and in its questioning and re-evaluation of the meanings of words (like hag, crone) *Gyn/Ecology* is an important text—Daly herself described it as an "extremist book"—it is nonetheless essentially a religious tract. Daly throughout has a prophetic style, and a woman's discovery of her real self—the Female Self—is seen as kind of spiritual rebirth. But, as Jean Grimshaw has perceptively written, what comes through strongly in Daly's book is the kind of elitist philosophy of "self-affirmation" that has it origins in the writings of Nietzsche, and the humanistic psychology of Rogers and Maslow. A central aspect of the theory of self-realisation and self-actualisation that both the later theorists espouse, was the need for autonomy and for independence, and for not 'needing' other people. Although Daly stresses the importance of 'community' (or rather sisterhood) her general orientation is to suggest that 'need' or dependence on other people is something to be avoided,

as essentially 'polluting' a relationship. Like de Beauvoir, and several other feminists, Daly's image of feminism implies, Grimshaw suggests, both emotional self-sufficiency and a willingness to ditch obligations and commitments to others without guilt or emotional ambivalence. Daly's ego-ideal seems to be someone—a woman—filled with wanderlust, a lusty woman raging and roaming through the world in search of her authentic self. Spinsters, like the tortoise with its moving shell, "learn to be at home on the road. Our ability to make our spirits our moving shelters, the various homes that house the domesticated, the sick, the 'mentally ill', the destitute" (1979, p. 395). As Grimshaw writes, all this is reminiscent of the male 'beat' style described in Kerouac's *On the Road* (1958). The difference is that whereas Kerouac assumed that women would be looking after the children, it is not at all clear whom Daly thinks will do this task. Many feminists have remarked that relationships with children rarely figure in Daly's study. In *Pure Lust* they do not seem to feature at all—thus contrasting significantly with that of many other feminists (Grimshaw, 1986, pp. 143-144).

Implicitly, therefore, Daly is seen by Grimshaw as steeped in the liberal individualist tradition that was propagated by Maslow, who was himself a great admirer of Nietzsche. This tradition stresses self-interest and personal autonomy at the expense of recognising the social origins of the self, and the necessary inter-dependence of all human beings. It assumes that individuals have only to discover their 'real' or authentic selves, and that there is a sort of pre-established harmony between the needs and interest of people—although Daly specifically refers only to women, men being forever lost in their patriarchal maraudings. Grimshaw feels that this harmony is akin to the supposed beneficent and unseen hand of the market, but Daly's vision of sisterhood is essentially a spiritual one. Grimshaw further emphasises the profoundly Nietzschean aspects of Daly's work—the contempt for the morality of Kant and the Judeao-Christian tradition which Nietzsche felt was hostile to everything that was life affirming; his biologism and his stress on the "will-to-power", the intrinsic urge or desire for self-affirmation; and finally the need for the transvaluation of values, of going beyond what Daly herself describes as the phallocratic categories of 'good' and 'evil'. Grimshaw stresses that Daly's views on a quasi-instinctual energy, and on the recovering of authentic being and life-affirmation, is all very much like that of Nietzsche. She questions whether Daly shared the elitist vision of Nietzsche and Maslow—which she cogently outlines—but one has to say that whereas Nietzsche put forward the idea of a superman, Daly with her "A-mazing Amazons" and the "race of lusty women" seems close to suggesting the notion of an elite group of 'superwomen'. Needless to say the title of her book *Gyn/Ecology* is a misnomer: Daly's vision is entirely gynocentric, and she has little to say on wider ecological issues, and nothing on the natural world and the creatures that inhabit it.

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■ CRITICAL REALISM: MARX AND THE MARKET UNITED?

Originally published in *Society and Nature* (1993)

Society and Nature: Towards A Green Social Theory
Peter Dickens, (Hemel Hempstead Harvester, 1992)

In the late sixties a parliamentary commission was set up to scrutinize the teaching of sociology in Colleges of Education. Sociology was then thought to be a very subversive discipline, one that might seriously undermine the morale of future teachers. Ironically, with the structural functionalism of Talcott Parsons then in its heyday, students of the discipline were, in contrast, highly critical of its conservative bias. It was felt that its key concepts—all derived from Comte, Spencer and Durkheim—tended to imply an over-socialized conception of humans and to oblate such issues as race, power, gender and class. The historical dimension of social life was lost in its organic metaphors, and its renowned jargon served only to cover up rather pretentious and shallow theories. William Morris's adage that our teachers must be of nature and history was somehow lost on the gurus of sociology, who seemed to ignore both.

An ambivalent attitude towards sociology was clearly evident in *The Raven 19,* which rather surprisingly included a praise-poem to August Comte, who by no stretch of the imagination could be considered a libertarian thinker. He is even absent from Peter Marshall's study, even though Marshall cast his net far and wide. This interest in, and ambivalence towards, sociology has continued in the recent pages of *Freedom*. Peter Dickens' recent attempt to provide a green social theory will, therefore, certainly be of interest to readers.

Dickens is an urban sociologist and Marxist, and the book is essentially an attempt to re-affirm Marxism as a 'unified science', one that brings together the social and natural sciences, while recognizing the relative distinctiveness and autonomy of the different sciences. The project is thus hardly original. Long ago, the anthropologist Marcel Mauss, himself a socialist, suggested the need for an anthropology that combined sociology, psychology and biology, and thus considered humans "as a living, conscious and sociable being". That was written in 1924. Since then, anthropology, unlike sociology, has always endeavoured to maintain this wide perspective, and it has been one that has not been overly scientistic, but has also had a humanistic dimension. Apart from drawing on the work of Malinowski and the sociobiologist Napoleon Chagnon, anthropological studies are completely neglected by Dickens. What he offers instead, using the early Marx as his theoretical base, is a series of forays into the intellectual terrain of sociobiology, modern biology, psychology, and neo-liberal, in other words, right-wing economic theory—with the prime purpose of supplementing Marxist theory. His essential aim, therefore, is the construction of a "single science"—a totalizing vision?—that would "dissolve"—reduce?—the distinction between humans and nature, one based firmly on Marx and Engels. Other

modes of understanding, or relating to the world, are, it seems, outside the purview of this unified science.

The way of organizing knowledge—and here Dickens largely follows the radical philosopher Roy Bhaskar—is to suggest a "Critical Realism," a mode of understanding that is based on an unacknowledged organic metaphor, and is reminiscent of old Aristotle. Thus, it is suggested that 'entities' such as humans or other organisms and those of inorganic nature have latent powers or capacities—which Dickens refers to as "generative mechanisms"—and that these mechanisms (which may not be observable) 'emerge' or are 'realized' or 'combine' in complex ways with contingent factors or circumstances. It is none too clear where social relations and cultural representations fit into the schema—as contingent factors?—or whether this theory simply replicates in more abstract form what Dickens clearly concerned to overcome, namely, the dualism between 'nature' and 'culture'. Needless to say, the principal themes that Dickens outlines as necessary for developing an understanding of environmental issues—that humans are a part of nature, that capitalism is based on private property, etcetera—are not specifically Marxist.

After an interesting but rather selective history of social theory, essentially covering Comte, Spencer, Tonnies, The Chicago School of Sociology, Parsons (bless him!) and Habermas, Dickens gives a succinct and valuable account of Marx's conception of the human sciences. He outlines Marx's dialectical method, in seeing a reciprocal relationship between the organism and their environment (although Marx, in fact, always stressed that our relationship with nature was inherently social), his conception of the human subject as a "species-being" (intrinsically both natural and social—Marx putting little emphasis on the psychological aspects of life), and his critique of capitalism as a form of human alienation. Such conceptions, of course, are by no means unique, or even original, to the young Karl Marx. His early writings written when he was in his early twenties (on which Dickens bases his theory) were no more than notebooks in which Marx critically reflected on the thoughts of Hegel, Feuerback, Adam Smith, Stirner and Proudhon, from whom he derived his key ideas. Although Dickens is aware of the criticisms of 'anthropocentrism' that have been levelled at Marx, like most Marxists he astutely and completely ignores the anarchist critique of his hero. Thus, John Clark's and Alan Carter's radical critiques of Marx's 'productivist' ethic and his authoritarian politics are not even mentioned. But what is even more surprising is that Dickens seems to argue that Marx supported the 'market system'—that our authentic "species-being" could, in fact, be "recovered under capitalism" (p. 62). This presents a travesty of Marx's thought, for Marx, whatever one may think of his politics, was consistently and passionately anti-capitalist. It does show, however, the degree to which contemporary Marxists have fallen under the spell of right-wing ideologies like Friedrich Hayek. This defender of laissez-faire capitalism is treated by Dickens rather reverentially, and his 'insights' applauded. Hayek's assault on

"institutional planning and control" did not, of course, extend to a critique of multinational companies, and his ecological awareness hardly went beyond that of the sociobiologists and ethologists—whom Dickens later in the study critiques for their genetic or biological reductionism. But throughout the text one can sense that Dickens is a state socialist, advocating the market, in spite of making some telling and insightful criticisms of 'green consumerism'. He clearly feels the 'market' is the place where we can 'recover' our freedoms and "species being" if it is suitably 'modified'; he continues to uphold the need for national and transnational governments (pp. 193-94), and seems to absolve 'production' (i.e., capitalism) or any direct responsibility for the present ecological crisis, contrary to the evidence he himself presents (pp. 50-51).

Like many Marxists, Dickens obviously feels the need to introduce a 'psychological' dimension into Marxist social theory. But apart from a brief mention of Vygotsky, the theories he turns to are all limiting, inadequate, and hardly what you might call radical in terms of stressing human agency—sociobiology with its gene/culture evolutionary schema that oblates human history and consciousness; Jung's rather mystical psychology which, as even a sympathetic supporter like Anthony Storr has to admit, is essentially asocial; and Ron Harre's overly cognitivist theory of the individual. Having just written a study of "Western Conceptions of the Individual," I am only too aware of the diversity of theories which have developed over the past 200 years, and which have in essence undermined or attempted to overcome the dualisms inherent in mechanistic philosophy and positivistic science. People like Capra and Merchant and to some extent Dickens write as if intellectual thought stood still between the early nineteenth century and the present decade. But note, we have for consideration: the pragmatic philosophies of James, Dewey and Mead; the writings of a host of Hegelian Marxists who attempted to put a psychological dimension into Marxism (Marcuse, Lukacs, Fromm, Reich et al); Neo-Kantian scholars like Wundt, Dilthey and Boas, who were searching for a more unified science a century ago; as well as existentialists such as Stirner, Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty and Laing, who put a fundamental emphasis on the embodied individual. Attempting to offer new directions for a unified human science (not to be equated with social theory), Dickens completely ignores most of the Western intellectual tradition, as well as important anarchist theorists like Kropotkin, and opts for Jung, the sociobiologists and Harre. However, it is worth stressing that human beings do not relate to the world simply through archetypes, or through their genes, or as an organism, nor in terms of the mind (with its deep structures), but as anarchists have long ago stressed, as a human subject, as a person, or, as Dickens outlines in discussing Giddens' recent sociology, in terms of human agency.

Dickens concludes by suggesting that the present crisis, and the dualism inherent in present culture, cannot be overcome simply through a change in consciousness or by green consumerism. In this regard he offers some interesting critical reflections on deep ecology—though again he ignores the anarchist critique of deep ecology by Bookchin. But rather, he suggests, it must be overcome

by the development of new social relationships and structures, and he briefly mentions bioregionalism and decentralized communities. However, for Dickens, this "backward-looking and arcadian vision of small-scale community life" is associated with anarchism and in essence dismissed; Dickens prefers something more modern and up-to-date, simply a modification of capitalism with both the market economy and the state structures intact. A reformist Marxist strategy…a marriage of Marx and Hayek…what an unholy alliance!!

■ ON MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT

Originally published in *The Raven* (1993)

Early in 1796 William Godwin's personal life took a sudden turn. He was invited to tea, along with Thomas Holcroft, by a friend and there he met Mary Wollstonecraft. They had already met some five years before at a dinner party given by the publisher Joseph Johnson. They apparently did not hit it off as Godwin found her incessant conversation irritating, as he had come to listen to Thomas Paine. They met again several times after that but appear to have generated in each other only a mild mutual dislike. But in 1796 things turned out differently. Godwin, aged forty and still a bachelor was then at the height of his fame, having three years before published his *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, Wollstonecraft was thirty-seven and her life over the past decade had been one where she was continually confronted with personal crisis and economic instability.

Like Godwin, Wollstonecraft was a professional writer, and after early employment as a governess for wealthy families, had established herself as a writer of distinction. She had travelled widely meeting Babeuf, Madame Roland and many of the Girondins in France and was actively involved in the circle of radical intellectuals that gathered around the publisher Joseph Johnson. Besides Godwin, the circle included Paine, William Blake and Joseph Priestley, the famous chemist and radical. In 1792 she published her famous *Vindication of the Rights of Women*. This study is widely recognized as the first major feminist text, and according to Godwin was written hastily in six weeks. It has been described as something of an 'extravaganza' and as lacking any logical structure, but Wollstonecraft's passion and energy clearly vibrate through its pages. Though influenced by Rousseau, much of the work entails a refutation of Rousseau's theories about women, for the philosopher saw a state of dependence as being natural to women. Her biographer Claire Tomalin sums up the content of the study in the following: "The theme is this: that women are human beings before they are sexual beings, that mind has no sex, and that society is wasting its assets if it retains women in the role of convenient domestic slaves and 'alluring mistresses', denies them economic independence and encourages them to be docile and attentive to their looks to the exclusion of all else". (1974; 136)

But within the study Wollstonecraft also made incisive criticisms of monarchy and aristocracy, of standing armies—which she argued were incompatible with freedom—and of the Church.

After an unsatisfactory relationship with a Swiss painter named Fuseli, Wollstonecraft had gone to Paris at the end of 1792. There she met American army captain Gilbert Imlay with whom she fell in love. They lived together for a while and she was called 'Mrs Imlay', though they never married. They were tragically incompatible, and Imlay soon deserted her, although they were together when she gave birth to their daughter Fanny, who was born in May 1794 in Le Havre.

Imlay left for London, and Wollstonecraft along with the baby soon followed only to find that he had set up house with another woman. Wollstonecraft was distraught and in October 1795 attempted to commit suicide—for a second time—by leaping into the Thames from Putney Bridge. Somehow she was rescued. Only three months later she renewed her acquaintance with Godwin. This time a warm friendship developed, and though both were clearly hesitant and uncertain at first, they eventually became lovers. By the end of the year Mary had become pregnant again, but feeling apprehensive and unable to face the ostracism of continuing to be an unmarried mother, she asked Godwin to marry her. Although marriage was seen by Godwin as an 'affair of property' and he thought too close attachments as unjust, he nevertheless agreed. They were thus married in March 1797 at old St. Pancras Church. Although they were very different in temperament their marriage seems to have been a happy one. But it was tragically short-lived, for Mary Wollstonecraft died in September shortly after giving birth to their daughter Mary. Her last words were about Godwin: 'He is the kindest, best man in the world'. Godwin never really got over the loss of his first greatest love. He was heart-broken. He shortly afterwards wrote a frank, honest and sensitive portrait of Mary as *Memoirs of the Author of the Vindication of the Rights of Women*—which acted as a consolation and a catharsis. In the *Memoirs* he indicated the enormous emotional and intellectual debt that he owed to Wollstonecraft. Peter Marshall has stressed that many important changes that he made to the subsequent editions of *Political Justice* were largely due to Wollstonecraft's influence—the importance of feelings as a source of human action and the central place of pleasure in his ethics (1984; 193). Godwin's attempt to tell the truth about his wife with sympathy and honesty only led to further abuse regarding his character. But Wollstonecraft's important contribution not only to feminism, but also to the anarchist cause should not be overlooked.

For important studies of Mary Wollstonecraft see

Flexner, E. 1972 *Mary Wollstonecraft* New York, Coward McCall

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Tomalin, C. 1974 *The Life and Death of Mary Wollstonecraft* Harmondsworth, Penguin

■ A CRITIQUE OF LIBERAL SOCIAL THEORY

Originally published in *Freedom* (1993)

David Miller's useful book on 'Anarchism' was an attempt—so he assured us—to rescue anarchism from the dustbin of history. He felt anarchism was an important political tradition and had something of value. It could teach us about the abuses of power, and about the possibilities of free social relationships. Miller, as a market socialist, advocated three specific values; economic efficiency, distributive justice and the control of "anti-social" behaviour. In terms of these values, anarchism was declared not to be a viable political option. He argued that without a market system and the nation state these values were simply not attainable. Hence Miller's advocacy of market socialism, otherwise known by its more familiar name of welfare capitalism.

Yet when we look at the real world, beyond the cloisters of Nuffield College, what do we observe? None of Miller's esteemed values are anywhere in evidence.

Take economic efficiency. What do we find? Poverty, malnutrition and famine throughout much of Africa and Latin America. There is ecological degradation, increasing desertification, destruction of forests and woodlands, depletion at all levels. Much of this is due to so-called "development"; to the intensification of agriculture, and to the economic maraudings of multinational capital in search of profits. Judged in terms of economic efficiency, capitalism—the market economy—is a complete and utter failure, and a serious threat to human survival.

As for "distributive justice"? What do we find? Corruption, injustice, and obscene and blatant social inequalities everywhere. Land holding and the ownership of productive capital, as well as access to the media, are everywhere maldistributed. Thus, for example, we find in Peru that 10 per cent of the landowners own 93 per cent of the agricultural land. We find that between 1982 and 1985 the Sudan exported millions of tons of sorghum—in order to feed animals in the richer countries—while at the same time thousands of peasants in southern Sudan were dying of hunger. People in extreme poverty, without access to land, without any visible means of support and often without even a roof over their head, are to be seen throughout the world living in juxtaposition to extremes of luxury and wealth. If anything there is, and always has been, an obverse correlation between capitalism and "distributive justice". For where commodity production prevails or intrudes, social inequalities invariably increase or are generated. The green revolution in India has not only been a breeding ground for civil unrest and violence, but, as Vandana Shiva and others have written, has lead to increasing social inequalities.

As for the nation state keeping the peace, or curtailing "anti-social" behaviour, what do we, in reality, find? Exactly the opposite. The state is *the* source of violent repression, of social and political harassment, and of the curtailment of civil liberties everywhere. Militarism is rife throughout the world, and the oppression of people by state functionaries, usually on behalf of commercial

interests, is the norm. As Vithal Rajan puts it, in referring to India: if a tiger is poached, the international community is loud in its disapproval: but if the police shoot ten tribal people defending their customary rights to the forest it is frequently not even considered an offence, and is certainly not reported in the international press. David Miller, like other liberals, has a rather quaint idea that governments are essentially neutral and benign institutions, serving to protect us from "anti-social" people. The reality is rather different: such institutions are there to support and protect private property and capitalist interests. This is clearly brought out in David Powell's recent study of the coal industry in Britain, appropriately entitled *The Power Game*. The book clearly states which side the state was on in the bitter struggles between labour and capital during the years of industrialism. At the periphery of the capitalist system, the state is not an institution that protects people; it is one that they need protection from. The reason that power has a capillary effect in modern society—as Foucault argued—is not because there are no centralised institutions but because the state is now so powerful. It is infrastructural—penetrating social institutions—as well as overtly coercive and despotic. Like the economic system of capitalism, the state is incompatible with liberty. Nowadays it is difficult to disentangle the two, and a form of state capitalism prevails.

There is no evidence for the supposed correlation between capitalism and freedom which liberal scholars like Friedman, Hayek, Gray and Fukuyama are so fond of stressing. John Hall and John Ikenberry in their Open University Book *The State* (1989) assert that early modern Europe was characterized by an intrinsic link between commerce and liberty (p. 52). Such a distorted reading of history is only possible if one completely oblates the fact that not only was there little liberty in Europe for working people during this period, but also the "commerce" of which they speak entailed rapacious mercantile trade, genocide and slavery. Capitalism, as Ngugi Wa Thiongo notes, "came to the world dripping with blood". It hardly needs mentioning that some of the most important liberal scholars—like Hume and Locke—were personally implicated in the slave "trade", worthy though they may have been in other respects. There has never been a correlation between capitalism and liberty if capitalism is seen for what it is; namely a world system that is intrinsically exploitative of people and of the natural environment.

As a political scientist David Miller has little interest in ecology. Even people who see themselves as radical ecologists—writers like Arne Naess, Paul Ekins, and Robyn Eckersley—and who are alive to current problems relating to "social justice" and "ecological sustainability", embrace, when it comes to offering some vision of an alternative future, the kind of welfare capitalism long ago suggested by liberal scholars. Their vision is no different from that of Miller. They are thus advocates of the "market" as the best way of allocating resources—and assume that it will simply cease to be exploitative of people and of nature. The state, they believe, will simply transform itself into a benign institution, one that will provide "macro-controls" on the market—protecting

ecosystem integrity, social justice and equality, as well as curtailing excessive concentrations of economic power. A political vision that is hardly new or radical: it just provides scholarly colleagues with an update on liberal theory taking into account the global ecological and economic crisis. It is an attempt to "green" liberal political theory, just as, at another level, multinational corporations are engaged in greening the retail business.

■ THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF EXCHANGE

Originally published in *Freedom* (1993)

The Anthropology of Exchange
John Davis, (Open University Press, 1992)

Anarchism, as a social movement, essentially emerged in the early nineteenth century. Although as a concept anarchy simply means the negation of government or coercive authority, this movement was from the beginning not only anti-state but also anti-capitalist. The kind of libertarian philosophy espoused by Ayn Rand and her anarcho-capitalist acolytes cannot therefore, by any stretch of the imagination be considered anarchist. Rand's egoism and elitism, her objectivist philosophy, her strident advocacy of laissez-faire capitalism as the 'unknown ideal', and her Hobessian conception of the state, makes her kind of politics a 'perversion' of libertarian thought—as Lance Klafeta puts it (*Anarchy* issue 34).

Though widely advocating an anti-capitalist stance anarchists have found it difficult to agree on what exactly should replace it. This is highlighted in Donald Rooum's little introduction *What is Anarchism?* And over the past year the pages of *Freedom* have indicated a diversity of suggestions as to what is to replace the present economic system. John Papworth (issue 13) writes that the problem that confronts us is not capitalism per se, but the "big capitalists" who in democratic terms are completely out of control. Thus he advocates Adam Smith's conception of the market economy with lots of small capitalists, lots of competition, and lots of consumer choice. This is the way, he feels, to prevent abuse and exploitation: "abolishing capitalism" for Papworth is simply not an option. All this of course is reminiscent of Proudhon's mutualism—the advocacy of a market economy based on small-scale petty-commodity production with communal banks, but without capitalists and with an equitable exchange system. Jason (issue 16)—like Marx before him—suggested that John Papworth simply did not understand the nature of capitalism, with its inherence tendency towards monopoly. A couple of issues later (issue 19) an editorial on speculators noted that anarchists were not opposed to any money (market) system, as long as it was akin to barter—but were inexorably opposed to money as a means of exploiting the labour of others or being linked to private property. But as another correspondent pointed out: for Rooum, barter itself was antithetical to anarchy!

In the bookshops now is a little primer on 'exchange'. Written by an anthropologist, John Davis, the author of an interesting study of *Libyan Politics* (1987), the book is in the Open University series *Concepts in the Social Sciences*, designed for the general reader. (The one on *The State* authored by John Hall and John Ikenberry, is significant in not mentioning any critiques of this institution!) Davis' little book on 'exchange' will not provide any answers to the issues discussed above, but it does indicate the diversity of exchanges that

are to be found in all societies (including our own) and offers a useful critique of what he called the 'marketists', the advocates of laissez-faire capitalism. His argument in the book is on two fronts.

On the one hand, Davis is against a whole tradition in anthropology which makes a fundamental distinction between 'reciprocity' and market exchanges, and assumes that the former (but not the latter) are total prestations, involving moral, social, political and symbolic dimensions. Davis shows, in outlining the 'exchange' repertoires of both the Trobriand Islanders and the British that each is exemplified by a diversity of different types of 'exchange' (marriage is missing from the British repertoire, but it includes robbery, corruption and bribery). Importantly, market exchanges, which tend to be seen to be intrinsically connected with a welter of symbolic, moral and political concerns. But Davis is unsympathetic to those postmodernist anthropologists who concentrate on symbols and meanings and assume that these have the only reality.

On the other hand, he is highly critical of the neo-classical economists who by sleight of hand attempt to equate reason with profiteering, and who, as did Ayn Rand—try to make out that we are all Hobbesian creatures, intrinsically selfish, and that all exchanges—gifts, altruism, alms—are profit-orientated. Davis shows how such arguments are fallacious. He stresses too that neo-classical economics—the market system—is a 'science fiction' and that economists have tended to conflate their model, as metaphor, with the empirical reality. The market principle, he writes, is not and never has been an autonomous reality, for when exchanges are really free, people (he ought to have written capitalists) do their best to create monopolies, to initiate insider deals and trading, and to restrict competition. The rhetorical contrast made between the state and the market assumes an antagonism where in fact there is only 'mutual dependence': perfect competition occurs only where governments intervene to maintain it. Davis never really develops these ideas, but rather advocates a rather static 'classificatory model' of exchanges, suggesting that what underlies exchanges everywhere is a morally, legally and ritually sanctioned classification scheme. He thus does not explore the distinction made by the historian Fernand Braudel between market exchanges and capitalism.

For Braudel, not only is the distinction between merchant, industrial and finance capital untenable, for leading capitalists have always combined, trade, production and finance, but the state has always been a constitutive element in the functioning of the capitalist system. Capitalism, according to Braudel, has never been a competitive free-market system. On the contrary, it has always consisted of monopolies, large and powerful corporations, that are supported and bolstered by the state. The beneficiaries of state intervention are always the monopolies, and capitalism for Braudel is in essence anti-market, in spite of the free market rhetoric. Witness contemporary debates about the 'common market' and the social effects of Thatcherism. Thatcher was a latter-day Ayn Rand. But such issues take us well beyond the exchange repertoires and the 'symbolism' of gifts, money and market exchanges with which John Davis's useful little book is largely concerned.

■ THE NATURE OF ECOLOGY

Originally published in *Green Line* (1993)

The Way: An Ecological World View
Edward Goldsmith, (Rider, 1982)

Exactly twenty years ago as one of the founding editors of the *Ecologist*, Edward Goldsmith published the ground-breaking document, *A Blueprint for Survival* (1972). It was seen by the editors as heralding the dawn of a new age, in which humans would learn to live with the rest of nature rather than against it. The document outlined the ecological crisis in succinct terms, and advocated a move towards a more sustainable society, one made up of decentralized, self-sufficient communities. The present text is a development of many of these key ideas. Goldsmith aims to outline the nature and scope of a new ecological world view, one he feels necessary to counter the adverse effects of the dominant ideology, which he refers to as modernism. Goldsmith offers both an important critique of modern science, and a reasoned argument for an alternative world view. Unlike many in the New Age movement, Goldsmith does not advocate a return to a specifically religious viewpoint, although he does see a close affinity between the cosmological world views of pre-capitalist societies and modern ecological theory. Instead, he engages in a thoughtful dialogue and a critical assessment of current biology. Apart from Polanyi and critiques of the empiricists, there is little discussion of philosophical issues, the organismic perspectives of Smuts, Whitehead and Jonas are not explored in depth, Bookchin's seminal work is ignored, and there is no engagement with eco-feminism. Goldsmith presents us with an essentially androcentric perspective, and apart from the anthropologists Douglas and Dubois, there is hardly any reference to women in the entire text.

Goldsmith presents his ideas in over sixty short chapters, and is thus the kind of book you can open at any page. Each of the chapters is prefaced by some very apt quotations, but references to these are not given, nor is there an index. The bibliography, though extensive and useful, certainly does not double as an index, as the author contends.

Ecology as a Form of Knowledge

In the first part of the book Goldsmith outlines the basic principles of ecology. It is an organismic theory that contrasts fundamentally with the kind of mechanistic science that he feels permeates contemporary culture, including much of what goes under the guise of ecology. Goldsmith argues that ecology is a form of knowledge that seeks to understand the laws of nature as a natural system, and that such laws have to be conceptualized within a holistic paradigm that is incompatible with that of modern science. Modern science conceives the world as essentially random, atomized and mechanistic. He stresses the importance of teleology (the search for purpose, inherent in all life processes) rather than causality (explaining things in terms of antecedent causes), and argues that

events and life forms can only be understood if situated within a context of space and time, one that essentially consists of a hierarchy of inter-dependent wholes (various life forms). Such ecological knowledge is intuitive, patterned, qualitative, and goes beyond inductive empiricism. Contemporary science is preoccupied with quantification, essentially serving the needs of governments, multinational corporations and international agencies. In fact, Goldsmith seems to see all academic disciplines as functioning "above all to rationalize, and hence legitimize, different aspects of the enterprise of economic development, or progress, to which our society is resolutely committed." (p.68) But Goldsmith argues that ecology is not simply a rational science—it is also an emotional and aesthetic activity, and he criticizes the separation of facts (science) from values (morality) and the cult of scientific detachment. In fact, he views modern science as a new form of (modernist) religion, with its priests in white coats, its aura of mystery and sanctity, and its esoteric texts—scientists are akin, he feels, to medieval theologians. Goldsmith sums up the ecological paradigm by suggesting that it is "based on the assumption that the world is orderly and purposive rather than random; organized rather than atomized; cooperative rather than purely competitive; dynamic, creative and intelligent rather than passive and robot-like; self-regulating rather than managed by an external agent; tending to maintain its stability or homeostasis rather than change perpetually in an undefined direction." (p.xvi)

The Natural Order

In the second part of the book, Goldsmith outlines his conception of the biosphere as a stable, self-regulating, homeostatic process. He assumes an evolutionary perspective, and argues that the over-riding goal of living things is to preserve the critical order and hence the stability of the Gaian hierarchy (the biosphere) of which they form a part. The earth itself is viewed, following Lovelock and others, as a single, self-regulating natural system, at once a life process and the unit of evolution. This process has both a temporal and a spatial aspect and is essentially seen as a 'hierarchy' made up of different life processes, or levels of organization—gene, cell, organism, species, society, biotic community, ecosystem, biosphere, each of which has a double function—as a part and as a whole. This process is governed, Goldsmith suggests, by order, continuity and stability, rather than change, and is essentially alive and self-regulating (homeostatic) at the various levels, including that of the biosphere itself. He argues then that life processes are not random, but purposive, dynamic, creative and anticipatory, and that co-operation and symbiosis rather than competition constitute the primary relationships within the biosphere.

Goldsmith covers much old ground in arguing that real wealth and real benefits are continually being derived by humans from the normal functioning of the biosphere—a stable climate, fresh water, fertile soil, and so on—all of which are ignored, or given no value at all, by the world view of modernism, crucially exemplified by that dismal science, economics.

Natural systems, as parts of the biosphere, are seen by a Goldsmith as all showing a common goal: the maintenance of a critical order and stability, both within the system itself (cell, organism, community) and of the biosphere as a whole. Goldsmith terms this *homotelic* (*homo*—same; *telos* = goal or purpose). Contrary to this is '*heterotelic* behaviour, which implies breakdown, disorder, maladjustment, behaviour that is misdirected, serving the needs of the individual system but not those of the biosphere. He acknowledges that heterotelic behaviour is a part of nature, but he suggests it is the exception rather than the rule, and all sorts of 'mechanisms' tend normally to exist to reduce its incidence.

State and Nature

In the third and more problematic part of the book, Goldsmith focuses on human society, particularly on vernacular societies which he views essentially as natural systems. Pre-state societies are thus akin in their functioning to cells, or organisms and biotic communities. They are conceptualized as having stable, orderly and self-sufficient social systems; as having an economy embedded in social relations so that reciprocity rather than self-interest is the norm; and as living in small-scale settlements and thus in harmony with their natural surroundings. He presents a rather idealized picture of pre-literate communities before the emergence of cities and the state—a functional theory that has long been abandoned by anthropologists. But importantly he sees the state as "unnatural"—as no more a natural constituent of the biosphere than is the multinational corporation. In contrast to vernacular societies which are seen as stable, organic and wholesome, contemporary industrial society is described as heterotelic, implying a breakdown of what were once natural systems. All the problems of contemporary society: alienation, alcoholism, 'disintegration of the family', crime, urban slums, poverty, pollution, ecological degradation, are seen by Goldsmiths at the outcome of modernism, of economic development and progress that has been rationalised by the paradigm of modern science. Through modern science, he argues, we have become maladjusted to the world in which we live.

Goldsmith argues that his own ecological theory is essentially similar to the cosmological and religious conceptions of pre-capitalist societies, but there are a number of problems with this. Firstly it is misleading to ignore the differences between repressive and hierarchic theocratic states, and naturalistic ecological theory.

Secondly, although Goldsmith stresses that the state is not a natural constituent of the Gaian hierarchy, he fails to emphasise the essentially conservative nature of theocratic cosmologies. Thirdly, the 'way' or 'path' in many of these cosmological systems did not simply imply conformity to a cosmic order, but also involved conceptions of a path of salvation. In Hinduism and Buddhism, this implied a negation of the cosmos and a release from the cycle of rebirths. The notion that until the scientific revolutions of the 17th century, people saw nature as a 'place of belonging', is invalid when the dominant ideologies of the theocratic civilizations are considered.

Many might perceive a conservative or even a reactionary bias in Goldsmith's advocacy of the family and of a cosmic order. But this book provides an important critique of the modernist world view, as well as a readable outline of the basic principles underlying an ecological world-view. Despite offering no concrete proposals, Goldsmith suggests the need for a revitalisation movement in the Gandhian tradition, seeking systematic undermining of the institutions of the industrial system.

■ RAJNEESH: THE GOD THAT FAILED

Originally published in *The Skeptic* (1993)

In the late 1970's several of my friends suddenly found themselves a guru. In the wake of the Beatles and the counter culture this was hardly novel. Mystics, gurus and oriental cults were then the fashion—as they still are—and the Hare Krishna tribe still chanted and sang up and down Charing Cross Road. But the guru my friends embraced was not like any other. For the Bhagwan, as he was called explicitly described himself as god (or, at other times, the Buddha) and advocated sex as a way of salvation. He offered, I was informed, real "freedom" and the key to salvation was "letting go" of the ego, of one's own individuality—by paradoxically offering oneself in total submission to the authority of the guru.

Prompted by my friends I read one of his books, 'The Psychology of the Esoteric'. It was, I discovered, a strange mixture of pop psychology and religion, with a touch of existentialism thrown in, and pretended to enact a synthesis of all religions. The thoughts of the theosophists and the mystic Gurdjieff lurked in the background. The book was written in a very persuasive, readable style, and indicated both wide erudition and a rather naïve understanding of the material world. Philosophically the book was hardly original, simply propounding a form of religious idealism that had been advocated by Vedantist scholars like Sankara more than a thousand years ago. I was hardly convinced, and only bemused at Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh's love of paradox. Here was a man suggesting that we must all be seekers after the truth, not the disciple of any guru. "Do not seek a guru", he wrote, "because gurus are crippling". At the same time however he was demanding that his followers "surrender" themselves to him, and he proclaimed "I will transform you". And my friends more than surrendered themselves to this "Enlightened Master". Here was a man suggesting like the Quakers that god was within each of us, yet at the same time announcing that anyone who believed in god was not only mentally retarded but utterly mediocre. Here was a man who wrote that we should only observe and experience life: "do not verbalize" he argued. Yet practically everything he said in his numerous public discourses was dutifully taped by his disciples and published. It was reckoned that around twenty five new books by the Bhagwan were published each year. His books (talks) are still being published: they made him into a very wealthy man.

In reading his books I always had the feeling he was something of a religious con-man. This in fact was almost how he described himself. "I am the best showman in the whole history of mankind" he declared. The Bhagwan was not renowned for his modesty. He was also an intellectual fake, often quoting such figures as Jesus, Marx, and the Buddha with words which were either spurious or complete fabrications.

Mohan Chandra Rajneesh was born in 1931 in a small village near Jabalpur in India, the son of a cloth merchant. He came from a Jain background, and

studied philosophy at Saugar University, taking his MA in 1957. Until 1966 he taught philosophy at the University. He then became a freelance lecturer and erstwhile guru, and in 1970 he moved to Bombay where he found support from some wealthy people. He made a name for himself through his outspoken criticisms of Gandhi and orthodox Hinduism, and he seems to have bowled many people over by his charisma and personal charm. Abandoning the role of 'acharya' (teacher), he took the title of 'Bhagwan', which means 'god' or 'the blessed one'.

Rajneesh was by all accounts a strange and eccentric guru. He lived in sumptuous luxury, and in his heyday owned a fleet of Rolls Royces. He advocated free sex, and had promiscuous sexual encounters with a host of admiring female devotees who, like one of my friends, swooned around him. He said he had loved more women than any man in history. "In the beginning', he recalled, "I used to keep count, but I've lost track". He thus emphasized "spiritual sexuality" as a way of salvation, and stressed the physical release of inhibitions through "dynamic meditation"—all as a way of enlightenment. Sex, for the Bhagwan, was divine, and must not be repressed. It was all part of "letting go", submitting oneself to the authority of the "Enlightened Master"—the Bhagwan himself. His disciples wore orange robes and decked themselves in a beaded necklace that held a medallion containing his portrait. Most of the teachings and the life style of this "sex guru" flew in the face of orthodox Hinduism—which is highly puritanical—and it is not surprising that he attracted young people from Europe and America. Most of his Indian followers were wealthy, professional people.

In 1974 the Bhagwan moved to Poona, and there established his famous ashram—but again, it was quite unlike any other ashram. What people in Poona told me about the place is fully confirmed—and detailed—in Hugh Milne's book *Bhagwan: The God that Failed* (1986). For not only was there "free-for-all-sex", but "there was a conscious indulgence in wine, music, song, feasting and sensual massage". A former bodyguard of the Bhagwan, Milne, like his guru, had numerous love affairs and sexual liaisons. The ashram was seen by Rajneesh as a kind of experiment, combining a range of Western therapies—bio-energetics, primal therapy, gestalt, encounter groups—with meditative practices drawn from all the major religious traditions, but especially the Sufi and Tantric traditions. (It is significant that nowhere in his voluminous writings on religion does Rajneesh mention Africa.) It was this "diverse package" that was known as 'dynamic meditation': and its aim evidently was spiritual transformation, expressed as the awakening of a "higher consciousness", as the "experience of Buddahood", or as the explosion of the "life-force" or "Kundalini energy" within the person.

As many of the devotees of Bhagwan were involved (it was alleged) in drugs and prostitution, and the ashram itself, as a profit-making religious charity, was being harassed for tax evasion, Rajneesh's whole enterprise soon came under the scrutiny of the Indian authorities. Although not mentioned by Milne, I was told in Poona that the Indian authorities also suspected CIA activities in the

ashram. Inevitably, facing arrest and having generated a lot of ill feeling among the people of Poona, the Rajneesh decided to shift his ashram to the United States. It was all done rather abruptly: only a few disciples knew about the move. There was then about six thousand sannyasins living in or around the ashram in Poona. Thus it was that in June 1981 the guru Rajneesh moved with his devotees to Oregon, having bought the Big Muddy Ranch for $5.75 million. Like Aurobindo before him, the new city was to be built by his devotees and named after him, Rajneeshpuram.

The events surrounding the activities of the Rajneesh foundation in America are even more involved and bizarre than those in Poona. Corruption, intrigue, conspiracy charges, arson, racketeering, attempted murder were all associated with the new 'commune' which suddenly fell apart in 1985. Under the leadership of the Bhagwan and his secretary and confidante Ma Anand Sheela—described by one recent journalist as a "foul-mouthed harpy"—the ranch initially flourished. Gurdjieff Dam, a 1.5 million dollar earthen dam was constructed, along with the Krishnamurti Lake holding 350 million gallons of water. Free labour provided by the sannyasins soon had about 2700 acres of land under cultivation, and a sophisticated sewage system was established. The Oregon commune soon had its own shopping mall, restaurants, stores, clinic, and offices—as well as its own airport and university—The Rajneesh International Meditation University. The whole undertaking—the "communal Buddhafield" as it was called—was organized as a capitalist enterprise, and around two hundred million dollars were spent in less than four years developing Rajneeshpuram into a new-age, futuristic commune. It was quite unlike the sprawling, untidy, hippie communes of an earlier decade! Most members of the commune were white, middle class professionals. Around two-thirds of them had university degrees, and almost all were in their thirties or early forties. There were no nurseries or schools however, for children were positively discouraged. As Judith Thompson and Paul Heelas write in their sympathetic account of the Rajneesh movement, women were asked "to give up the distraction of having babies so that they (could) focus their attention on Bhagwan's vision" (90). But women played a central role in the administration of the commune, under the direction, it appears, of Ma Anand Sheela.

By 1983 "Rajneeshism" was being propagated as a new religion, the Bhagwan had taken a vow of silence, and between four and five thousand devotees were living on the ranch. Then things started to go awry. Relations between the commune and their Oregon neighbours, which had never been amicable, began to seriously deteriorate. Devious methods were employed by the followers of the Bhagwan to rig the local elections: the devotees were encouraged to build up an arsenal of handguns and semi-automatic weapons in order to protect the guru: and Ma Sheela regularly appeared in public or on national television, brandishing a magnum, and denouncing the local people of Oregon as "bigots", or "hicks" or "monkeys". Such antipathy towards outsiders was coupled with growing control and intolerance within the commune. A siege mentality developed.

Visitors to Rajneeshpuram were strictly monitored, activities in the commune and contacts with outsiders strictly controlled, and an electronic surveillance system was installed—every telephone tapped and every room in the commune bugged. In 1984, it appears, an attempt was made by Ma Sheela and her acolytes to poison—with salmonella—a nearby town of nine hundred people. On top of this the Bhagwan was accused of conspiring to violate U.S. immigration laws.

In the autumn of 1985 the commune suddenly fell apart amid acrimony, confusion and paranoia. The community—the "Buddafield"—was dramatically split asunder, the schism largely focussing around what had all the signs of a lover's quarrel between Rajneesh and Ma Anand Sheela. In September Sheela abruptly left the commune for West Germany, along with a small group of leaders. She announced that she had grown tired of pandering to the whims and needs and irrationalities of a guru who she dubbed a liar and a crook. This seems to have caused the Bhagwan to break his vow of silence, and the following month he accused Sheela of establishing her own "fascist regime" within the commune, and fleecing the Rajneesh corporation to the tune of some 55 million dollars. He likened his secretary to Adolf Hitler, as someone who lusted for power and was wracked with jealousy. As in Poona four years earlier, the Bhagwan made another abrupt departure from his commune, this time destined for Bermuda. But he was arrested while fleeing the country, at Charlotte, North Carolina, where he was fined $400 thousand dollars, and given a suspended sentence of ten years. Around the same time Sheela was arrested in Germany, and after extradition and plea-bargaining with the U.S. authorities, was eventually sentenced to four and a half years imprisonment for immigration fraud, arson and attempted murder.

After travelling the world for a while seeking a safe haven—many countries, including Sweden, Germany and Britain refused to grant him a visa—the Bhagwan eventually returned to India. He died at Poona in January 1990, aged only 58.

"Jesus saves, Moses invests, Bhagwan spends" was a favourite bumper sticker at the Oregon commune, displayed as Rajneesh drove silently among his admiring devotees in one of his ninety-three Rolls Royces. At Poona many people were appalled at the Bhagwan's somewhat arrogant display of wealth, when he totally ignored the poverty of the Indian people just outside the ashram. But unlike Gandhi, Rajneesh was never really concerned with the material well being of ordinary people—only with the spiritual salvation of the affluent. He described himself as a "materialist spiritualist" and remarked "blessed are the rich because they are already inheriting the kingdom of god". He stridently supported and advocated the capitalist system and the work-ethic, and held very anthropocentric views, considering humans as "nature's highest peak". In many ways Rajneesh updated the Protestant ethic, shifting the emphasis from production to consumption. His eclectic hedonistic mysticism is the religious counterpart to much post-modernist philosophy—simply a reflection of the culture of consumerism.

The biography of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh is a strange story. It recounts the sudden rise of a shrewd, intelligent, charismatic figure from obscurity to world fame—for at the peak of his popularity the Bhagwan had thousands of devotees, and assets well in excess of $100 million, and he was hailed as another messiah. His demise as a guru was equally sudden, and he now stands discredited, although as 'Osho' his remaining devotees at Poona still attempt to keep his memory green. He is alleged to have never lived and to have never died. But perhaps Lord Acton was right: power tends to corrupt, and absolute power, even religious power, corrupts absolutely.

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■ A NEW WORLD ORDER OR CAPITALISM REVAMPED

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A New World Order: Grassroots Movements for Global Change
Paul Ekins, (Routledge, London, 1992)

This is less of a book than a very useful and interesting compendium of the many initiatives that have emerged during the last decade, social movements whose aim has been to counter the destructive tendencies of world capitalism. Interesting, the latter term comes to be mentioned only on the last page of the book. Ekins is an economist and research director of the Right Livelihood Awards Foundation, awards that are presented annually in Stockholm to people and organisations that have attempted to offer concrete solutions to the global crisis that now confronts us. Many of the recipients of the award are described in the present work. The text is clearly written and relatively free of jargon, but it is marred by Ekins' baneful tendency to continually use coded abbreviations. Thus in one short sentence he can write: "The GOG R&R are often presented … but … ten per cent of the SSP's PAP's and none of the NSP's" (page 91).

The first chapter gives a short but succinct outline of what Ekins describes as the "global problematique", the four basic problems of unprecedented magnitude that now confront the world.

The first is the widespread existence of weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, chemical and biological) and the very high level of military spending that exists throughout the world. This is spent not only on weapons of mass destruction (which constitute only about 20% of global military spending) but on conventional weapons, research and the militia. This stockpiling however can hardly be said to have kept the peace, for since the Second World War there have been well over a hundred major wars in all parts of the world, killing an estimated 22 million people. Ekins seems to put this state of affairs down to aggression and insecurity that are intrinsic to the human condition.

The second crisis is the rampant poverty that exists throughout the world, but particularly in Latin America and Africa. It is estimated that around 20% (one thousand million) of the world's population are suffering from absolute poverty, that is, they are unable to obtain the basic conditions for human survival. Ekins quite misleadingly sees this poverty, like war, as "integral to the human condition". Such an assumption was refuted by dependency theorists like Gunder Frank a generation ago. Ekins views such poverty as being caused by 'development', and offers a crude explanatory diagram based on the notion of 'rich' and 'poor' nations. It thus evades the 'class' nature of capitalism and sees relationships between countries only in terms of trade and aid. Not surprisingly he finds it "paradoxical" that development benefits the core.

The third world problem he discusses is the environmental crisis—the widespread pollution of the atmosphere, species destruction, deforestation, and the

increasing desertification that threatens the very survival of the biosphere, let alone human life.

Finally, Ekins briefly outlines the fourth problem, the denial of human rights and the widespread genocide and political oppression by governments throughout the world. He notes the fact that western governments, particularly the US, have given full, even if covert, support to the most oppressive regimes and dictators—and they still do. But rather surprisingly Ekins makes no mention of Chomsky's important writings on state-sponsored terrorism and the use of force not so much to bolster dictators but to keep the world open to the 'Fifth Freedom'—the freedom of capitalists to rob, to exploit and to dominate.

All these four problems, Ekins contends, are interlinked by "a single, systematic 'problematique' of great complexity" although "he seems very reluctant to give this 'problematique' a name". It is of course the world capitalist system which is the 'military machine', the poverty, the environmental crisis and the widespread repression.

In the second chapter Ekins gives a brief critical outline of three United Nations commissions that have examined world problems: the Palme Report on *Common Security: A Programme for Disarmament* (1982), the Brandt Report which looked at economic development, world poverty and the issue of 'survival', and the Brundtland report *Our Common Future* (1987) which reported on the environmental crisis. It seems that the United Nations has never established a commission to look into the other world problem, that of repression, but then, as the United Nations is composed of national governments who are largely responsible for the political repression this is hardly surprising. Ekins gives useful critique of these "conventional" approaches to world problems, and notes that they all presuppose or support the existing economic system, and tend to have an exclusive preoccupation with nation states. He gives short but salient notes on the limitations of both trade and aid. Free market capitalism, he suggests, leads to dependency relationships, loss of autonomy and increasing inequality, while aid has little to do with serving the interests of the poor. He interestingly notes the similarities—as "command-and-control economics"—between multinational corporations and the state capitalism of Eastern Europe and the old USSR.

This analysis, brief and dense though it is, essentially entails a sustained critique of the world capitalist system, although Ekins seems to see this system largely as an exchange mechanism involving trade and aid between nation states, rather than as a mode of production that is intrinsically exploitative. And he also seems to be under the mistaken impression that this critique has only recently emerged. But this analysis leads Ekins to argue for a 'new' approach to world problems, and this approach he sees as being expressed by the new social movements which have emerged in the last decades—although it is important to recognize, I think, that such movements have a long history going back to the beginnings of capitalism. And the value of the book is in the brief accounts

that Ekins gives of these movements, as reflected in organisations and certain selected individuals. He thus outlines:

1. Those organisations (like the European Nuclear Disarmament movement) and individuals—Thompson, Kelly and Galtung are examples—that have sought to establish real security by means of generating public opinion in the direction of peace initiatives and disarmament.

2. Those organisations such as Amnesty International, feminist associations and Survival International that have been active in defending human rights.

3. Those grassroots movements that have sought to express "another development", one that is conducive to the well-being of local communities. Among those he discusses are the Sarvodaya movement (Sri Lanka) and the Working Women's Forum (India), and he links these with reformist organisations in the United States and Europe that advocate the "progressive market", the notion that one can happily combine profiteering with economic activities that do not have negative social and ecological effects.

4. Environmental movements such as the Chipko movement (India), Sahabat Alam (Malaysia) and the Green Belt movement (Kenya), which are local and decentralised initiatives concerned with defending the local environment against commercial interests or in projects such as tree planting.

5. Finally, Ekins outlines the 'new' model of development in relation to such issues as health, education and housing. Addresses of all the organisations mentioned are given in the Appendix.

One has the impression in reading through this useful book that, for all his strident criticisms of capitalism and of governments, Ekins actually believes in some benign form of capitalism that is non-exploitative of people, non-destructive of the environment, and not implicated in any form of political repression. He also seems to believe in some form of 'nation state' that does not represent the interests of the rulers and the economic system, but rather serves the general well-being of all the people. Thus poverty, exploitation, repression and environmental degradation are seen as a "paradox", as a kind of moral lapse on the part of capitalists or the political elite. Thus although he bemoans the fact that third world "elites" maintain repressive governments and stash away their wealth in banks outside their own country, and is highly critical of the effects of both aid and trade, the normal, legitimate workings of capitalism go unchallenged. The exploitation of human labour which creates the wealth, through sweatshops, share-cropping, estates and plantations, factories and mines; the appropriation of profit by capitalists (which moves essentially from 'south' to 'north'); the fact that 'capital' freely moves to where it can generate the most profit (regardless

of the social and ecological consequences) while the movement of people is strictly curtailed within the parameters of the nation state—all these repressive features of capitalism are completely by-passed by Ekins. And it is significant that the collective organisations that defend the rights of workers in the third world—share-cropping associations and trade unions—get no mention at all in this book.

When we come to the conclusions, Ekins' reformist position—which runs counter to the whole tenor of the book which supports grassroots organisations, co-operatives, local autonomy and decentralisation—becomes only too apparent. He divides the world up into three groups—the beneficiaries of the "power structure" or the "order" (industrialists and elite workers, and the professional middle class), the servants (by which he seems to mean essentially third world workers) and the dispossessed. Such a categorisation, like his use of the terms north/south, rich/poor throughout the book, completely obscures, of course, the class nature of capitalism, and grossly simplifies the complex nature of world capitalism and its intrinsic relationship to the nation state. Teresa Hayter's critique of the Brandt Report *The Creation of World Poverty*, published a decade ago (1981), has altogether a much more politically aware analysis than this present text.

In the final pages Ekins outlines three 'forces' that are creating the supposed divisions—scientism (the hegemony of modern science), developmentalism (industrialism, consumerism and growth, i.e., industrial capitalism) and statism. He seems to be suffering from some kind of historical and political myopia, and is thus blissfully unaware that critiques of all three forces have been expounded for more than a century by romantics, socialists, hermeneutic philosophers, ecologists and anarchists. But the real paradox of the book is that having provided us with a very useful critique of capitalism and statism—in the process of outlining the grassroots organisations—Ekins ends by suggesting:

"State power has a vital role to play in people's self-development. It must provide the basic institutions to encapsulate and frame the market so that the market mechanism may work to general advantage."

To advocate 'state power' and the 'market' makes all his pleas for cultural diversity, democracy, ecocentric perception, individual autonomy and social justice all sound rather hollow and rhetorical. In framing ideas for a "new world order" Kirkpatrick Sale's 'bioregionalism' and Murray Bookchin's 'social ecology' seem to me much more promising than the kind of welfare capitalism suggested by Ekins.

■ GUSTAVE COURBET, 1819-1877

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Peter Marshall's "Demanding the Impossible' is more a history of anarchist ideas than of anarchism. Coming to his subject from the liberal side, we thus get pages and pages on laissez-faire philosophers and anarcho-capitalists—people like Mill, Spencer and Ayn Rand who were by no stretch of the imagination anarchists. Inevitably, given this focus, revolutions and socialism tend to get marginalized—though they are there, and Black Flag's depiction of Peter as the "David Irving of Anarchism" is a little unfair.

It comes then as no surprise that Gustave Courbet barely gets a paragraph in Marshall's book—for Courbet was a revolutionary painter, a socialist, and a person who, it seems, wrote precious little for prosperity. He had throughout his life a complete distaste for any kind of intellectual work, and hated books. His friend and mentor Proudhon, ten years his senior, described Courbet as nothing but a painter. "He can neither talk nor write", wrote Proudhon, and "though he is built like a Hercules, the pen is as heavy in his hand as a crowbar in the hand of a child". This did not stop him co-authoring with Proudhon a book on modern art, but most of it was written by Proudhon. It was published just after the latter's death in 1865, an event that profoundly affected Courbet. Shortly afterwards Courbet painted the famous portrait of Proudhon—as he was in 1853.

Gustave was born in the little town of Ornans in the alpine foothills of France, close to the Swiss border. The town is less than twenty miles from Besancon, Proudhon's birthplace. He spent most of his early life as an art student in Paris, but every year, usually in the later summer, he made a pilgrimage back to his native countryside around Ornans. Here he wandered through the hills, which were then teeming with wildlife, and through the cultivated fields. Here he spent his days painting landscapes and portraits of local peasants—all in a realistic style.

Around 1850, when he was thirty years old, two important events occurred in Courbet's life.

The first was that he suddenly found himself famous as a painter—almost overnight, as a lot of his early work had been rejected by the salon. He had exhibited in Paris a number of large paintings, such as *Burial at Ornans* and *The Stone Breakers*, which had created a sensation in the art world. Instead of painting like the classical artists or the romantics airy mythical themes, such as angels or nymphs or knights in armour, Courbet painted earthy, realistic studies of contemporary French peasants working in the fields, engaged in everyday activities. He thus overnight, and almost single-handedly, created a new school of painting, realism, which was later to have an important influence on the impressionists. For Courbet, though, he only painted in the school of Courbet.

The other important event was his meeting with Proudhon. There is no doubt that Proudhon influenced Courbet profoundly. He introduced Courbet

to socialist ideas, and to dissident political groups, and the two men spent a good deal of time together. They had much in common, coming from the same peasant background. Both at heart were peasants in outlook. But Courbet led a much more disordered life. He never married, though he had many casual relationships with women. He has been described as monumentally vain, ribald, huge in bulk and appetite, rustic and somewhat naïve. Proudhon described him as like a spoilt child in many ways. But Courbet had a keen intelligence, was a great painter, and had a very clear sense of his own independence and individuality. He was also open and honest and loyal, and stuck by his friends.

There has been a tendency among his many biographers to see Courbet as politically muddled and naïve, or as being led astray by his friend Proudhon. Neither is the case, for though he rarely expressed his ideas on paper—except in letters—Courbet throughout his life identified himself as a libertarian socialist.

It was inevitable then that Courbet should join the Paris Commune in March 1871, even though he was a pacifist. He was elected Chairman of the Artists Federation, and was appointed to the committee on public education, and was active in the protection and re-organization of the museums. In May the Commune was suppressed after protracted street-fighting in which some seven thousand men, women and children were killed. There followed in June the bloody repression ordered by the Versailles government under Thiers, when a further thirty thousand communards were summarily tried and executed. Courbet was arrested that same month for his part in the Commune, and was held responsible for the destruction of the Vendome column. He was found guilty and sentenced to six months imprisonment. The column, hated symbol of Napoleon's empire, had been toppled in May to the cheers of twenty thousand Parisians. After his release, Courbet was again re-tried for the destruction of the column, and, contrary to any sense of justice, was found guilty, and ordered to pay the entire costs of rebuilding the Vendome column—half a million francs. Unable to do this, for it was way beyond his means, he chose exile instead of further imprisonment, and spent the rest of his days as an exile in Switzerland.

A year prior to the Commune, Courbet had been awarded the Legion of Honour. This he refused, and in his letter to the Minister, he concluded:

> I am fifty years old and I have always lived in freedom. Allow me to end my days in freedom. When I die I would like it to be said of me: this man never belonged to any school, any church, any institution, any academy, and above all, any regime unless it is the regime of freedom.

He died on the last day of December in 1877, aged fifty-eight.

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■ GUILD SOCIALISM RESTATED YET AGAIN

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Associative Democracy: New Forms of Economics and Social Governance
Paul Hirst, (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1994)

In a little book published almost eighty years ago on *Political Thought in England: from Herbert Spencer to the Present Day* Ernest Barker suggested, in his critique of Guild Socialism, that either the state must go, as the syndicalists and anarchists had advocated—and for our Oxford scholar this could only mean 'chaos'—or the state would remain. If the state did remain it would inevitably have final responsibility for the life of all its citizens, and if it was socialist it would be a form of State Socialism, as advocated by the Fabians and Marxists. It would then entail a bureaucratic governing class that would regiment and control all aspects of social life. There was no half-way house for socialists, and Barker poured scorn on the guild socialists who advocated 'two democracies', a 'separation of powers'—economic democracy in the workplace through co-operative associations (or guilds), and state power at the political level.

Paul Hirst's *Associative Democracy* is essentially an updated and re-affirmation of G.D.H. Cole's *Guild Socialism*. As an ex-Marxist, however, Hirst is now seemingly disillusioned with socialism—which he seems to equate with Soviet Marxism—and like Barker and Cole before him, seems unable to envisage any society without a state, although for him it is supposedly of a federal variety. His study thus lacks the anti-capitalist tenor that permeates the work of G.D.H. Cole, who, of all the socialist historians, was most sympathetic to anarchism. The trouble was that Cole was as much influenced by Rousseau as he was by William Morris, and thus came to envisage a 'partnership' between the state and the worker-controlled guild system. Essentially he tried to find an *alternative* to capitalism—one that was neither anarchist nor state socialist.

Hirst's book is full of interesting and substantive reflections on the current political crisis. What he offers is an advocacy of *associationalism*, seen as a viable alternative, or rather corrective, to the two current political ideologies—state socialism and liberal democracy. Both of these, he argues, are now moribund. He gives a cogent discussion and critique of the three main types of economic theory—socialist central planning, Keynesianism, and neo-liberalism (Hayek)—and clearly indicates his affinities with Keynesian 'demand management', if this is given institutional support and is balanced by cooperative agencies. Thus 'associative democracy'—the governance of social affairs through voluntary organisations—is seen as a 'vital supplement' to existing institutions: representative liberal democracy, bureaucratic state welfare, and the big corporations (p. 42). He argues that individual liberty and human welfare are both 'best served' when as many of the affairs of society as possible are managed by voluntary and self-governing associations (page 19)—but like Cole see such associations as co-existing with the state, and—significantly unlike Cole—sees

them not as replacing but as happily supplementing the market economy (read capitalism).

Hirst has a rather benign view of both the state and capitalism. The latter is not seen as an exploitative system (in fact the market 'promotes liberty'), nor even as a world system, but only in terms of national economies that offer a better standard of living for people in Western societies than did the Soviet system. The poverty, malnutrition, ecological degradation, nuclear warheads and political repression that is intrinsic to capitalism is by-passed. As for the state, Hirst has a typical liberal (i.e., mythological) conception of the state as a neutral benign force, and he continually speaks of the state in terms of 'public power', as if state institutions serve general public interests—the 'general will'? That the state is an institute of coercion and oppression, whose primary function is—as an old syndicalist would express it—to 'protect property', is equally downplayed by Hirst. He writes that the function of that state is 'primarily that of the preservation of individual rights'—news to me. But his 'utopian' state secures for its citizens not only fundamental human rights, but protects the freedom of the individual to associate, offers welfare provision and public funds to voluntary bodies, and lays down the ground rules for associations so that 'peace' prevails. He reflects on the fact that the nation-state is becoming 'obsolete', without emphasising that the supra-national agencies that are replacing it—multi-national corporations, the World Bank, the IMF, and the various trading blocs—are not only highly undemocratic institutions but largely serve to bolster and manage the capitalist system. To see the 'Common Market' in positive terms as a 'public power'—and as an example of federalism in action—and thus unrelated to European capitalist interests seems to be somewhat dubious.

Although the state is seen by Hirst as the 'glue' that holds a 'voluntaristic society' together, it seems to have all the characteristics of the states of old—it is 'strong' and has 'police powers' (i.e. coercive), it is involved in the 'defence of territory' (so much for the demise of the nation-state) and it has forms of compulsory control of individuals. And you certainly will not be free to join it. Hirst has an illuminating discussion on the 'ultra individualist' who refused to participate in the associations (as these are supposedly voluntary associations there is no reason why the person should?), and concludes that the only option open to him or her is to give greater powers to the state (p. 60). A weird kind of logic?

All-in-all Hirst offers us a truly reformist programme. He claims that Proudhon (along with Laski and Cole) was one of the precursors of associative democracy. He was not, Hirst argues, an anarchist but advocated a 'federal *state*'. Proudhon was a man full of paradox, but I am not sure he would have approved of the idea that voluntary cooperation (mutualism) is simply to be seen as a 'supplement' to the welfare state and to multi-national firms, helping to boost the profits and the ultimate management control of the latter—as Hirst contends. His idea, surely, was to replace them?

■ THE CHIPKO MOVEMENT

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Early in 1973 a group of villagers near Gopeshwar in the Garhwal region of Uttar Pradesh asked the Forest Department for permission to cut some ash trees in order to make some agricultural implements. To their astonishment they were refused permission. This decision incensed the local people. The Department had already allotted ash trees in the Mandal forest to a business corporation in far-off Allahabad, one that manufactured sporting goods.

For many generations the forest resources of the Himalayas had been open to commercial interests and timber, forest products like resin and raw materials had been long extracted from the forested regions. Since independence, however, this exploitation of the hill forests had intensified, for there was as essential continuity between the colonial and post-colonial forest policies. These policies had already undermined the autonomy and relative prosperity of the hill people and had led to the loss and degradation of the large tracts of forest as well as giving rise to serious flooding and landslides in the Himalayan region. Only three years earlier—in 1970—an unusually heavy monsoon had caused a devastating flood in the Alknanda valley. The village of Belakuchi, only 45km from Gopeshwar, had been swept away, six bridges, 10km of roads and over 600 houses destroyed, with considerable loss of livestock and human life. Over 500 acres of standing paddy crop had also been devastated. The villagers, who had borne the brunt of the hardship, were not slow to perceive the obvious links between the floods and landslides that were becoming increasingly common and the deforestation of the region through commercial logging.

The refusal of the Forest Department to grant the local people permission to cut the ash trees was the last straw. Villagers decided to act against this blatant injustice. Their cause by was taken up by a local cooperative society, the Dashauli Gram Swarajya Sangh, which was based on Gandhian principles. One of its leading activists was Chandi Prasad Bhatt. This 'self-help' society was established in 1964 and, like other Sarvodaya societies in the Himalayan region, had been inspired by two European devotees of Gandhi, Mirabehn (Madeleine Slade) and Sarla Behn (Catherine Heilman). After independence, both these women had settled and established ashrams in the hills of Uttar Pradesh. In 1961 Sarla Behn ('behn' means 'sister'), who had long been writing articles and books on ecological problems of the region, created the Uttarkhand Sarvodaya Mandal. It was to work for the 'uplift' of the local communities and to protect the Himalayan environment.

During the 1960s the Sarvodaya movement focussed its activities on four major concerns—the organisation of local women, the struggle against the widespread distillation and sale of liquor, the fight for the forest rights of the local people, and the setting up of local forest-based small industries on Gandhian principles. An important figure in the early Sarvodaya campaigns was Sunderlal Bahuguna, who was a disciple of both Mirabehn and Sarla Behn.

With respect to the dispute in the Mandal forest, the villagers and the Swarajya Sangh were at first unsure of a possible course of action. Then Chandi Prasad Bhatt hit upon the idea of embracing the trees. Thus the Chipko movement was born, the term loosely translated being 'Hindi' for 'hug'. The movement soon spread to other areas, always adopting as a strategy the Gandhian philosophy of non-violent direct action—what Gandhi called Satyagraha, the force of truth (*Sat* = truth, *agraha* = firmness). In 1974 massive demonstrations were organised to protect the Reni forests from the timber contractors. As local men and the Swarajya Sangh activists had been deviously lured away elsewhere by government officials—so that the contractors' axemen could move unchallenged into the forests—it was largely left to the women to defend the trees. This they did under the leadership of Gaura Devi.

Throughout the next five years in different parts of Uttar Pradesh village communities protected and occupied local forests, defending them from commercial exploitation. They faced harassment from local police who were moved in to protect the contractor's interests. Many Chipko supporters were imprisoned. Women were centrally involved in these struggles, while Sunderlal Bahuguna went on his famous treks through the Himalayas spreading the Chipko message. Eventually, after a meeting with Bahuguna the Indian prime minister, Indira Gandhi recommended a fifteen year ban on commercial forestry in the Uttar Pradesh forests.

The Chipko movement has usually been interpreted in terms of contemporary debates relating to feminism, Gandhian philosophy and environmentalism. It did of course embrace all these three movements, but it is highly misleading to see the Chipko movement solely in terms of current concerns.

Some have seen the Chipko movement as being primarily a women's movement. This has been especially stressed by Vandana Shiva. What seems to have troubled Shiva, rightly, is that all the media coverage on Chipko was focussed largely on such leading male activists as Bahuguna and Bhatt. Consequently the women's contribution to the Chipko movement has been neglected or remained invisible. Shiva sometimes goes to the other extreme and ignores men completely. In her important study *Staying Alive* she not only associates men with capitalism, colonial forestry and modern Cartesian science, she virtually *equates* them—which is highly misleading. But her general plea, namely the recognition that women are the 'real pillars' of the Chipko movement, is surely justified. Stressing the 'women's bid to save the forest wealth' (which was the subtitle of an early booklet on the Chipko movement) cannot therefore be dismissed as 'romanticism'. Women played—and are still playing—a central and crucial role in the movement, and the reason for this is self-evident. For women are the 'backbone' of hill society, based as this was on organic agriculture.

Unlike the social system of India's plains, most of the agrarian population of the Himalayas were owner-cultivators and there was an absence of sharp inequalities in land ownership. The village community has a sense of social solidarity and agriculture was largely focussed around women. Although men

ploughed the land, the women did most of the cultivating, weeding and harvesting of the crops, as well as looking after the domestic animals. They were also responsible for the household tasks and for the collection of fuel, fodder and water. Both fuel and fodder were gathered from the forest. There was thus an intimate and intrinsic link between the forest, agriculture and animal husbandry. In a sense, the forest augmented the nutritive value of the agricultural fields via the medium of livestock. Thus the destruction and the restrictions on the use of the forest directly affected women. As Thomas Weber puts it, "sheer survival made women support the movement".

Equally the Chipko movement cannot be seen simply as an expression of Ghandian philosophy. Bandyopadhyay and Shiva (1987) write that, "The Chipko movement is historically, philosophically and organisationally an extension of traditional Gandhian satyagraha". Such a statement lacks any sense of history. Indeed, Shiva misleadingly tends to think that deforestation and the exploitation of forest in India begins only with the arrival of the British raj. But as I tried to show in my book *Forest Traders*, the exploitation and marketing of forest products in India—teak, bamboo, medicinal herbs, sandalwood, spices such as ginger, cardamom and turmeric, and ivory being the most important—go back many centuries and forest resources were always an important source of revenue for the early states. Although there was no private property, the forests always came under the jurisdiction of some local ruler or state.

This is illustrated by an early incident briefly mentioned by Shiva. In 1731 near Jodhpur in Rajasthan a group of peasant villagers resisted a detachment of men sent by the local maharaja, or state ruler. The men came to cut down some Khejeri trees, as the king had decided to build a new palace. But these shade trees, which were drought resistant, were also important fodder trees for the local peasants. So they resisted the onslaught of the wood-cutters, one young woman, Amrita Devi, hugging one of the trees that was marked for felling. She was killed and her shrine is now an important place for religious pilgrimages. Shiva suggests that with this event begins the recorded history of the Chipko movement. But this was by no means the first time that peasant and tribal communities in India had resisted the intrusions of the state, and it is worth noting that of the 359 people killed in this particular affray, the majority were men. This of course took place some three centuries before Gandhi.

Thus to fully understand the Chipko movement one needs to put it in the same historical context as peasant movements throughout history who have long defended—on all continents—their traditional rights to the forest as against commercial and state interests. The Chipko movements, as Ramachandra Guha cogently outlines in his study *The Unquiet Woods*, is only the last in a long line of peasant movements who have defended their traditional forest rights and their subsistence economy against state encroachment. It was fundamentally a protest against state restrictions on peasant access to forest produce and reflected two very different attitudes to land—the one concerned with subsistence

and ecological and social well being, the other with the utilisation of land for the generation of profits.

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■ THE ECOLOGICAL WORLDVIEW

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In his book *Problems of Knowledge and Freedom* (1972) Noam Chomsky mentions a Japanese farmer who had on his wall a poster which read:

> Which road is the correct one, which is just? Is it the way of Confucius, of the Buddha, of Jesus Christ, Gandhi.... Or is it the way of Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, Hitler, Napoleon, President Johnson?

Whenever ecological issues are discussed—by such worthy writers as Fritjof Capra, Carolyn Merchant, deep ecologists like Bill Devall, Peter Marshall, Vandana Shiva and Edward Goldsmith—we are invariably presented with this kind of dualistic vision of the world, one which suggests no alternatives...

You can *either* support Cartesian mechanistic philosophy, with its radical dualism of humans and nature, its reductionist science, its ethic of domination and power and its anthropocentric attitude to nature (and such a world view is often misleadingly equated with science or, even worse, with European culture generally); *or*, you can support various religious traditions—falsely and misleadingly equated with ecological thought—which are alleged to be holistic and ecocentric. Under the label of 'ecological thought' or the 'organismic perspective' are thus placed a wide variety of religious traditions—Platonic philosophy, Buddhism, Sufism, Hinduism, the mystic philosophies of Plotinus, Aquinas and Eckhart, the religions of clan-based societies, and esoteric Christianity—as well as anything that strikes the fancy of the New Age acolytes. But of course these various traditions are not ecological but spiritual: they are theocentric rather than ecocentric. 'Spiritual ecology' has always seemed to me a contradiction in terms, a bit like Christian anarchism.

In terms drawn from the Hindu context the choice we are therefore given is that between the Kshatriya, who expresses aggressive violence and political power, meat-eating, sexual assertiveness and an attitude of domination towards nature, and the Brahmin priest. Holding religious power, the Brahmin exemplifies non-violence, vegetarianism ritual and sexual purity, and a sacramental view of nature, seeing its unity expressed through spirit or various deities.

What is completely overlooked in all these radical ecology texts are two things.

One is the organic tradition of clan-based and peasant societies, a tradition which is expressed in their herbalism, their biocentric attitude to nature and in their subsistence economies. This is an empirical tradition that is quite distinct from their religious culture. The latter culture only comes into play when the organic links between humans and the natural world have broken down—through inexplicable disease or natural calamities. Religion implies an institutionalised separation of people from their life-world, and posits a 'higher' order of reality (god, spirit, ideas, deities) that is distinct from natural, organic

processes. To conflate this organic tradition (and the participatory and symbiotic relationship with nature that it implies) with religion is highly misleading, as it is to conflate life with spirit. The prayers and religious rites of tribal and peasant communities do not express a religion of 'nature' but rather a reverence towards, or communication with, the spirit world.

The whole idea of the 'sacred' means to be separated and, as John Zerzan has suggested, shamans and priests are intimately linked with hierarchy and institutionalised power. But an attitude of domination over nature begins not with language, classificatory systems and agriculture, as Zerzan seems to argue, but with the rise of gender and class hierarchies and the state.

Of course, many religious figures throughout history have expressed in their writings an ecological sensibility (essentially derived from the organic communities which gave them sustenance) as well as indicating an aesthetic appreciation of nature. And many early intellectual traditions, such as Taoism and Samkhya philosophy, expressed an ecological ethos. Of this there is no doubt. But religion *per se* is distinct from people's everyday life-world.

Secondly, radical ecologists like Capra, Merchant and Shiva, with their rather static conceptions of two modes of thought, seem to lack a real historical sense. They thus seem to down-play the fact that the Western philosophical tradition, as well as science, has changed tremendously over the past two centuries. For Merchant, European intellectual history seems to have stopped in 1750, enabling her to suggest that a 'new' ecological paradigm is now needed to replace the 'dominant mechanistic paradigm'. This would imply, of course, that all the earlier religious traditions—which are supposedly ecological—are not really ecological at all?

No one will deny that reductionistic, mechanistic science is not dominant in contemporary culture. How could it be otherwise, serving as it does the needs of capitalism and the state? As Capra has perceptively written, it is pervasive in such disciplines as economics and psychology, and it underpins both biomedicine and agribusiness. But to imply that critiques of mechanistic science only emerged with eco-feminism and deep ecology indicates a woeful ignorance of the history of Western culture and philosophy. For modern (Cartesian mechanistic) science has been under fire since the end of the eighteenth century. It was critiqued by Kant, by the romantics and by biologically-informed thinkers. Both Goethe and Hegel attempted to develop an alternative scientific outlook, and, conceptually, it was dealt a fatal blow by Darwin over a hundred years ago.

Coming either from the physical sciences—both Capra and Shiva were trained as nuclear physicists—or from academic philosophy, radical ecologists rarely mention Darwin. Yet it was Darwin who not only provided the basic ideas and concepts of ecological thought, but as Hans Jonas and Ernst Mayr long ago suggested, provided us with a new world view that completely undermined the pretensions of both religion and mechanistic science.

In introducing the idea that humans are not the special products of god's creation but evolved according to principles that operate throughout the living

world: in stressing the intrinsic organic (not spiritual) links between humans and nature; in undermining completely—long before quantum physics—the 'mechanistic world picture along with 'cosmic teleology' and 'essentialism'; in emphasizing the crucial importance of openness, chance, probability and the individuality of all organisms in the evolutionary process; and in suggesting a way of understanding that was both naturalistic and historical (rather than static and spiritual)—in all these aspects Darwin initiated a new world view that spiritual ecologists still seem to yearn for.

John Seymour has just written a book arguing against what he calls the "ultimate heresy", namely the suggestion that humans are separate from nature. Seymour proclaims—as if it was some brand new idea—that this is not the case and that "we are a part of nature". Needless to say, although it purports to delineate the history of humankind's attitude to nature, the book makes no mention at all of Darwin.

An ecological attitude to nature has been around a long time. It is a naturalistic attitude to the world and views nature not as an organism (spiritual or otherwise), nor as a machine, nor as some female deity, but as a historical process. The world is thus seen as a natural process from which both life and consciousness have historically evolved, a world which can be lived and understood without recourse to a postulated god or spiritual agencies. The relationship between humans and nature is thus neither one of spiritual unity nor one of radical opposition (humans being identified with spirit, nature with mechanism), but rather it is one that is organic and symbiotic.

This ecological world view has long been expressed by tribal and peasant communities in their organic traditions—traditions that are still sustained in those contemporary movements advocating organic farming and permaculture. It was equally expressed in the writings of many naturalists throughout the centuries, at least from the time of Aristotle and Theophrastus. Yet students of natural history hardly get a mention in Peter Marshall's *Nature's Web*, which although an excellent text is focused unduly on the philosophers such as Heidegger, many of whom even if they ventured out of their study probably wouldn't be able to recognise a woodpecker or distinguish a celandine from a buttercup! It was expressed also by such philosophers as Jan Smuts in his *Holism and Evolution* (1926) and by Whitehead in his philosophy of the 'organism'. But whereas Smuts was an avid botanist, Whitehead, like Plato, was fundamentally a mathematician and could never fully rid himself of the idea of a god who sustained the world. And finally, the ecological world view has been cogently expressed in the last two decades by Murray Bookchin, building on the insights offered by Hegelian philosophy, contemporary biology and writers in the anarchist tradition like Kropotkin and Mumford.

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■ THE GREEN REVOLUTION

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The world is in a sorry mess. Political repression and corruption is rife everywhere. Governments nowadays so blatantly give support to capitalist interests—the rich, the landed aristocracy, the multinationals, and corporate interests generally—that one is flabbergasted that there are still liberal scholars around who enthuse about the state. Bolstered by such a repressive institution, it is hardly surprising that the capitalist economic system is wreaking havoc everywhere. It has become a potential threat to the life-support systems of this earth, and thus to human survival itself. As we look around the world we are thus struck by two things:

One is the increasing degradation of the natural environment, through the eradication of forests, the depletion of soil fertility and its loss through erosion, the increasing trend towards desertification in savanna regions, and the widespread pollution.

The other is the rural poverty, the malnutrition, and the famine conditions that exist in many parts of what is now called the "south".

There has been some debate as to whether the ecological crisis is as tragic or as serious as the radical ecologists make out. But nobody I think has disputed the reality of the economic crisis. It has thus been generally accepted that poverty and malnutrition is widespread, and that around 20 per cent of the world's population are not able to satisfy their basic subsistence needs. The ecological and the economic crises are, of course intrinsically linked, and have long been recognized by United Nations agencies. The Brandt Report (1980) dealt with the problem of "survival" and the economic issues, while the Brundtland Report (1987) dealt with the environmental deterioration. The latter report came up with the concept of "sustainable development", the assumption being that economic growth (i.e., capitalism) and ecological security are perfectly compatible. Critiques of both these reports abound.

Now when the economic boffins and political mandarins look at the issue of rural poverty and malnutrition they tend to see this problem as having two underlying causes:

One is the contention that the world is overpopulated. There are, they suggest, too many people, and there is thus not enough food to go round.

The second is that rural people have inefficient and unsophisticated agricultural practices—they lack fertilizers and agricultural know-how—and thus do not produce enough food. Nigel Dudley in the book *Land is Life* (1992), notes that this constitutes a kind of equation:

OVERPOPULATION + POOR AGRICULTURE = FAMINE

The answer to the problem is, then, population control and economic development through the promotion of large-scale capitalist agriculture. This

simplistic solution not only blames the victims, but suggests a solution that in reality is a part of the problem—namely, intensive agriculture.

There is no evidence to suggest that overpopulation is the reason why people have insufficient food: in fact the Food and Agriculture Association (FAO) has estimated that the world produces enough grain to give everyone about 3600 calories a day, more than enough to keep us healthy. What is amiss is the maldistribution of food resources, through social and economic factors, as Susan George (1976) long ago explained. Nor are supposed "poor" agricultural techniques responsible for the rural poverty or the famines. Throughout history, or at least since the neolithic revolution, people have practised a form of sustainable organic farming that has, under normal conditions, generally provided them with their basic food requirements. Even hunter-gatherers rarely experience food shortages.

But in seeing food shortages as essentially a technical problem, the "green revolution" was launched some three decades ago. In terms of raising per capita wheat and rice production this revolution has been hailed as a great success story, especially in Mexico and India. And there is no doubt that if you commandeer the best land and local water supplies, use high yielding varieties of rice and wheat, pour on the land expensive fertilizers and pesticides, use cheap labour, and mechanize the production process, that you can get high crop yields. Per capita rice production in Asia is thus said to have been increased by 27 per cent. But as Susan George discussed—and her views have been reiterated by many—the social and ecological costs of this revolution are enormous, and on the whole it has done nothing to improve the average diet of people in the countries where it has made the most impact. In the Sudan it could be said to have caused the famines.

The problems associated with the green revolution are many, and have been outlined cogently in recent years by both Nigel Dudley and Vandana Shiva. It has to be recognized at the outset that this revolution, supported by the Rockefeller Foundation and the World Bank, was not specifically aimed at improving the well-being of people in the "Third World"—though this was expressed in the rhetoric of the international agencies. What was involved was the maximising of the profits of rich farmers and agribusiness. Who really profited from the Green Revolution, Susan George asked. In all cases, she replied, it was the multinational corporations.

This first thing to be said is that the high yielding varieties of wheat and rice, developed and promoted by the green revolution agronomists, are not in themselves high yielding at all. For they only give high yields under certain conditions i.e., if they are lavishly supplied with artificial fertilizers and pesticides, and are given heavy inputs of irrigated water. All these inputs, of course, are expensive, and only the richer farmers and the large estates run by multinational corporations can afford them. Thus small farmers, lacking capital or credit, are forced out of business, and the good agricultural land becomes concentrated into fewer and fewer hands. As greater profits obtained from growing cash crops

for export—strenuously encouraged by the World Bank and FAO—there is a switch away from local food crops to the growing of such crops as tea, coffee, tobacco and soya beans (mainly for animal feed). Monoculture takes over, poor peasant farmers and pastoralists are forced on to marginal land, and the use of agrochemicals increases, poisoning the landscape. It is estimated that around 10 thousand people a year die of pesticide poisoning, and many people suffer from it. In this process agriculture, forestry and animal husbandry are ecologically separated—whereas in organic farming they are intrinsically linked—and both genetic diversity and ecological diversity, reflected in a varied landscape to which there is open access, are severely reduced.

Nigel Dudley has summed up the results of the Green Revolution as follows: "an increase in concentration of land ownership; and a decrease in environmental stability and the sustainability of farming, through higher uses of agrochemicals, increased monocropping and the further displacement of poor farmers into marginal areas" (1992: p. 8).

Vandana Shiva calls the green revolution in India "a recipe for desertification" (1989: p. 143).

Thus the outcome of the Green Revolution has been: an increase in the social inequalities and landlessness among rural peasants, the increasing privatisation of land, a decrease in the food supply to the poorest people—the ones who go hungry—and high hidden costs in terms of human health and environmental degradation. In addition, development policies involving intensive chemically based agriculture, run on capitalist lines, has been largely responsible for the creation of a huge debt problem in the "south"—of which Susan George has also written at length.

The main benefactors of the green revolution have therefore been the multinational corporations and a few rich elites in the "Third World". As the rural peasants have resisted the privatization of the common land and the social effects of the green revolution—which has particularly undermined the role of women—so the state has become more and more repressive, always supporting, of course, the large landowners and the interests of the multinational corporations. In India, Vandana Shiva suggests, the green revolution has become the breeding ground of civil unrest and violence.

As in Britain in the 18th century, the green revolution is leading to the destruction of peasant society—which, it must be said, is far from being the ideal society as anarchists envisage it. It is being replaced by large scale capitalist agriculture. The peasants, however, are not giving up their land without a struggle.

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■ THE SHINING PATH

Originally published in *Freedom* (1994)

Some Notes on the Communist Party of Peru

In recent issues of Freedom the Shining Path movement of Peru has been described as a "Mao-fascist drug gang" and as a ultra-reactionary "terror group". In a popular account of the movement, whose activities are now reaching the headlines, the journalist Simon Strong describes it as the "world's deadliest revolutionary force"—a force that over the past decade has been a serious threat to the Peruvian state.

What exactly is this movement? And what does it stand for?

The Communist Party of Peru by the Shining Path of José Carlos Mariategui, otherwise simply known as the Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso), was formed in the early 1960s by a young philosophy professor at Ayacucho University, Abimael Guzman Reynoso. Taking his inspiration from Maoism, Guzman from the first saw his small clandestine party as the 'Fourth Sword' of world revolution—following on from Marx, Lenin and Mao Tse Tung. Charismatic, scholarly—he wrote a thesis on Kant—and something of an autocrat, Guzman was known to his close disciples as Dr 'Puka Inu', Quechua for the 'Red Sun'. In propaganda pamphlets Guzman is always depicted as the intellectual—holding a book.

From the beginning, even before it began the armed struggle, the Shining Path was a tightly-knit, disciplined, sectarian Marxist Party, which emphasised obedience to the party-line and devotion to the dictates of its autocratic leader, Guzman—the 'commie thug' as Howard Marks calls him.

In the early days the activities of the Shining Path largely focussed on Marxist propaganda. Guzman, from his base at the University of Ayacucho, conducted seminars and study groups among student-teachers, who, returning to their local communities, spread the revolutionary message. This message combined the Maoist strategy of armed struggle in the periphery, with the radical Indigenismo (the glorification of Indian, specifically Inca, traditions) of José Carlos Mariategui, a Peruvian communist theoretician of the 1920s.

From the outset therefore the Shining Path was not a peasant movement, it was a revolutionary movement focused around a Jacobin-like Marxist Party, a group of revolutionary intellectuals under the dictatorship of Guzman who aimed to achieve their goals through military means. It thus put a fundamental emphasis on violence. A favourite Sendero slogan suggests that "except for power, all is illusion". For the Shining Path violence is not only a military strategy, it carries with it also a certain mystique, for it is the means of both destroying the old order and ushering forth the alleged new egalitarian state—ruled of course by the party elite. The essential aim of the Shining Path, then, as dictated by Guzman in various political tracts, was to mount an armed uprising in the Andean highlands of Peru that would then spread to the urban areas and lead

to the eventual collapse of the Peruvian state. The party—the state in embryo—would then take over the reins of government.

The first action of the Shining Path, in its self-declared armed struggle, was in May 1980 in the Rio Pampas Valley where the anthropologist Billie Jean Isbell had conducted research in the 1960s. She has written on the impact of this 'people's war', as the Shining Path calls it, on the peasant communities of the valley. She felt the Shining Path chose the valley for its guerrilla operations precisely because it was lacking in haciendas, for this would allow the Sendero to experiment with peasant communities that had strong communal ties and structures, a great deal of autonomy over their own resources and where capitalist penetration had been minimal.

The insurgency began when masked militants from the university entered the town hall of the village of Chuschi and seized and burned the ballot boxes which were being stored there prior to the national elections. The Shining Path then set about intimidating and eliminating all representatives of authority in the area, and these included elected local officials, teachers and health workers. They particularly focused on petty bureaucrats who had abused their office, and publicly executed two cattle thieves. Initially the Marxist insurgents found support among the peasants, for the region of the Southern Andes had, over the centuries, long been the context of peasant rebellions and of class conflict—as the peasants defended themselves against the landowners and state authorities. The people of the Rio Pampas valley thus did not initially oppose the Shining Path's armed revolutionaries.

But the Shining Path soon set about organising the restructuring of the lives of the peasants themselves, and any opposition by the peasants was harshly dealt with. They attempted to suppress and prohibit the fiestas, dancing and drinking of the peasants—but did not succeed. They also attempted to impose on the peasants a system of collective planting based on local residential units, and in this they also failed. Isbell noted that local agriculture production was complex, and based on an intricate network of reciprocity, and suggested that in this regard the Sendero militants were as ill-informed as the government's agrarian reform planners. The Shining Path also decided to organise the peasants through committee structures, making attendance at meetings compulsory. They thus not only wanted to impose on the peasants a puritanical code of morality but, acting as revolutionary vanguards, to restructure their whole social life according to their own preconceived plans. Thus when the peasants began to realise the committees imposed by the Shining Path gave them even less voice in deciding their own destiny than did the structured imposed by the government and its bureaucracy, then, as Isbell writes, they began to distance themselves from the Marxists programme of the insurgents.

Even worse when the government forces moved into the area in an attempt to crush the armed insurrection, members of the Shining Path simply fled from the valley leaving the peasants to face the repression by the armed forces. This included the massacre of entire villages, random disappearances and a return to semi-feudal practices.

During the armed struggles of the 1980s the peasant communities therefore faced a 'double threat' from the Shining Path and from government forces, both of whom used extreme violence against the peasantry. Many peasants thus felt compelled to leave the valley and to seek safety and refuge elsewhere, many in Lima. Isbell concludes that the Shining Path did not bring the peasants the promised truth, it merely replaced the old order with its own authoritarian power.

Many writers have remarked on two characteristics of the Shining Path.

The first is that in attempting to completely transform village communities into the 'new democracy of Peru' with the party taking on the role of an authoritarian state, it showed no respect at all for grassroot organisations. It had an idealised view of the Inca past (state) and thus in its activities not only disregarded but attempted to suppress all peasant-based organisations—peasant communities, labour unions, neighbourhood associations and even local markets as these were seen as being implicated in the capitalist system. All these were to be replaced by so-called 'generated organisms'—generated and of course controlled by the party. But the Shining Path not only harassed and attempted to suppress the spontaneous activities of the peasants, it also directed a campaign of assassination, sabotage and armed attacks against other Marxist groups—all of whom were seen as 'enemies' of the revolution.

A second characteristic of the Shining Path is that its membership seems to be mainly drawn not from Indian peasant communities but from the Mestizos (Mistis). The Mestizos are largely urban dwellers, and traditionally they have formed the local elites who oppressed the indigenous peasants. Many writers have therefore stressed that the Shining Path is not a peasant movement but is an insurgency led and directed by Mestizos who have adopted a Marxist ideology and who have selectively used terror to achieve their goals. Peasants thus tend to perceive the Shining Path insurgents as rootless outsiders, as egoists who do not speak Quechua—and thus reject the cultural heritage of the peasant (campesino) with its emphasis on reciprocity and sharing.

In proclaiming itself as the 'Fourth Sword' of Marxism and as the 'beacon' of world revolution, the Shining Path is essentially a vanguard party that stands in the Jacobin tradition of Marxist-Leninism. Its activities are deemed to constitute the 'new state in formation', and as Carlos Ivan Degregori has argued, its essential ideology has been to reject the leading role of the masses in favour of the leading role of the party, and to see violence as the essence of revolution. He also argues that the Shining Path is not a messianic movement, neither is it specifically ethnic; what its vision expresses is a super-rationalism, an 'excess of reason', puritanical, violent, coldly analytic. He describes the Sendero as the "last children of the Enlightenment" and like other writers, stresses that its leadership is made up of Mestizos rooted in the Andean seigniorial system. It thus carries to the extreme the authoritarianism of the old provincial Mestizo elite, wrapped in an aura of Marxist theory. Some have described the Shining Path as a 'Andean jihad' which has converted Marxism into a religion, and Guzman himself likened his movement to early Islam. Many have compared the Shining Path to the Khmer Rouge of Cambodia.

Towards the end of the 1980s the Shining Path extended its guerrilla operations into the Upper Huallaga valley. Here some 65% of all coca leaf used in the manufacture of cocaine worldwide is grown. This production generates about $1.2 billion in foreign exchange each year—about half of Peru's legal exports. To the degree that the Shining Path have been able to control the area, so it has been estimated that they have been able to generate through 'revolutionary taxes' an annual revenue of well over $20 million. This has completely transformed the armed struggle in Peru and made the position of the peasants even more complicated and precarious, caught as they are between the Shining Path militants and both the anti-guerrilla operations and the anti-drug campaigns of the Peruvian state.

It can be seen then that the Shining Path is not a populist peasant movement but rather, as Cynthia McClintock suggests, it has the characteristics of a fundamental religious sect. Violence and fundamentalism, of course, often go together and although the Shining Path use of terror has not been indiscriminate but has been geared to revolutionary aims, it may be noted that in 1989 some 76% (995) of their victims were either peasants or poor urban dwellers. It has been estimated that since the insurgency began in 1980 the conflict with the government has cost 23 thousand lives.

Many writers have stressed the fact that the Shining Path had its origins in the Ayacucho region—which was one of the poorest and most isolated areas of Peru. It has been said that it was Ayacucho's poverty that provided the fertile ground for the growth of the Shining Path, whose activities have now spread to many parts of Peru. But although one can respect the dedication and zeal with which the Shining Path has tried to forge a new social reality for Peru's people, in its obsession with a violent strategy and in its total disregard for the initiatives of the peasants and workers, it is hardly worthy of emulation. In its vanguardist approach to change it is simply following the trail suggested by Marx, Lenin and Mao—the dangers of which were highlighted by Bakunin long ago. Rule by a Marxist intelligentsia especially one which sees violence as the essence of revolution, could lead only to the worst of all despotisms. One thing is certain, as Peruvian anarchists stress: the activities of the dogmatic and authoritarian Shining Path in no way reflect the aspirations of the people of Peru.

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■ CHRISTIANARCHY: MYSTICAL ANARCHISM, OR JUST PLAIN MYSTICISM?

Originally published in *Freedom* (1995)

Christianarchy: A Primer in Christian Anarchism
Wayne John, (Black Cat Publications, Brighton, 1995, £1.00, plus postage)

This is a bizarre pamphlet. It advocates eschatological Christianity as a form of anarchism, but the second-coming is to be in the here and now, although there is little sign yet of any representative of the anarchic 'holy spirit' appearing among us, apart from David Icke. Wayne John is surely a pseudonym, but whereas the original John Wayne was on the side of raw hide (matter) his opposite number is on the side of the spirit. His conception of God (always in capitals) however is of the panentheist variety, that is of a god that is both transcendental (*pan*, all) and imminent (*en,* in). He also believes that Jesus is the messenger—the message being 'communal individuality'—the 'physical reincarnation' of this divine being. But Wayne John, rather eclectically, is also able to discern 'mystical anarchism' in Taoism (a naturalistic mysticism), Buddhism (which repudiates theism), Sufism (which is a theistic mysticism) and paganism, as well as in atheism, for the 'holy spirit', Wayne tells us, is a truly universal spirit "so what is atheism but that which sings God's praises whilst calling Him by another name" (p. 9). I trust you are able to follow this logic, and have noted that the holy spirit is a 'Him' with capitals. This advocate of new-age spiritualism, however, never really informs us who or what constitutes the 'holy spirit'—although presumably it has some ontological reality?

In suggesting that the initial source of 'anarchism' was spiritual, the creation of religious mystics, Wayne John of course completely ignores the organic and secular traditions that pre-date and are distinct from both Enlightenment rationalism and spiritualism (mystical Christianity), and he completely oblates the fact that this spiritualism intrinsically implies divine or charismatic authority, as well as being fundamentally opposed to an ecological perspective. And it is absurd to suggest, as does Wayne, that secular anarchism implies the deification of humans.

Wayne quotes liberally from Nicolas Berdyaev, whose eschatological Christianity is clearly a source of inspiration. Now, there is much that is valid and much to admire in Berdyaev's writings, but in his advocacy of aristocratic culture, in his strident anti-materialism (for him, sex was a form of slavery, and all 'necessary' aspects of human existence of little value), and in his extreme individualism (of a spiritual variety) Berdyaev was essentially a religious mystic not an anarchist. In fact Berdyaev, as Wayne John ought to be aware, emphatically repudiated anarchism. As he wrote in *Slavery and Freedom*, the anarchist notion of a stateless society—where communal individuality thrives?—is utopian, and based on a "lie and a seductive delusion" (1943, p. 150). Like Ayn Rand, Berdyaev held a Hobbesian conception of human nature, and thus

advocated the neo-liberal doctrine of the state, for the state is conceived of as an unfortunate necessity. For Berdyaev the state has an "organic function", it is the 'servant' of the people, protecting and defending human rights.

Given his individualism and Hobbesian conception of human nature, it was natural that Berdyaev should completely misunderstand Bakunin (a Russian aristocrat like himself) and other social anarchists, in thinking that an emphasis on the community, and on the social nature of humans, necessarily implied a form of 'totalitarianism'. Yet Berdyaev's notion that the state was a "co-operative association" that would use its power to guarantee human freedom, was Berdyaev's own 'delusion', one which, unlike his mentor Tolstoy, he was never able to shed. The natural home of Berdyaev's kind of spiritualism, like that of another of Wayne's favourites, Joachim of Fiore, is not a stateless society but the monastery.

■ COLONIZATIONS

Originally published in *Radical Philosophy* (1995)

Eco-Feminism
Marie Mies and Vandana Shiva, (London and New Jersey, Zed Books, 1993)

During the past decade we have seen a spate of books on the politics of ecology, environmental issues and eco-feminism. Among this welter of studies two stand out: Marie Mies's *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale* (1986) and Vandana Shiva's *Staying Alive* (1989). Both were seminal—substantive, empirical, integrative in approach, neither lost in philosophical musings, nor enrapt in the more mystical versions of New-Age eco-feminism. The two scholars have come together to produce this volume. It follows the style of their earlier work in combining a philosophical critique of the dualistic rationalism of the Enlightenment (without going to the other extreme and collapsing into relativistic postmodernism), with a cogent critique of world capitalism. The authors eschew a socialist perspective; socialism, for them, seems to be equated with Marxism, and Marxist theory, in turn, with patriarchy—a logic of domination and the worship of 'mammon'.

The book is a joint work. It consists of a collection of alternate essays, many of which have been published before. But unlike other books of this kind, the whole work hangs together rather well, mainly because both women have a shared understanding of the origins of the present social and ecological crisis. Together the essays cover a wide range of topics and issues; and insightful critiques are offered of modern science, of the new reproductive technologies, of modern capitalist agriculture and the 'development' ideology that accompanies it, and the dualistic rationalism that is held to underpin both modern science and the capitalist world system. In a particularly interesting essay, 'White Man's Dilemma', Mies emphasizes that capitalism is philosophically based on a series of fundamental dualisms—between men and nature, men and women, city and village, metropole and colony—and she refers to these dichotomies as 'colonizations'.

With both writers we thus have an underlying emphasis on two important themes. One is that modern science is patriarchal, anti-life, and colonial in its essential structure. The other is that the crucial issues of our time are all intrinsically interconnected: the ecological degradation of the natural world; racism; patriarchy (the fact that Third World women are the people most vulnerable to the 'development' of commodity production is stressed throughout); and neocolonial exploitation. And all, the authors argue, have their source in what they call the 'capitalist patriarchal world system'. Unlike a host of other eco-feminists, deep ecologists and environmentalists, both Mies and Shiva, like Bookchin, thus view the ecological crisis as related neither to generic humanity, nor simply to the male gender, nor even to mechanistic philosophy per se. Instead, the 'culprit' is held to be a historically specific social institution—world capitalism.

Unfortunately, they do not specifically examine capitalism as a *class structure*: and thus do not emphasize the first and most crucial 'colonization'—that over human labour, male as well as female. This leads them to marginalize men throughout the text, and to focus on the 'north/south' divide. The later division, however, is both misleading and contentious. Stemming from the Brandt Report, which Teresa Hayter long ago critiqued, such a division is specifically designed to obscure the class nature of capitalism. In advocating a 'subsistence perspective' as an alternative to the present capitalist ethos and system, and in pleading for a universalism that is supposedly non-Eurocentric—a perspective based on a non-exploitative relationship towards nature, on human solidarity, and with an emphasis on basic human needs—the authors present a distorted and rather monolithic interpretation of both the Enlightenment and Marxism. The liberty, equality and fraternity embodied in the French Revolution are adjudged abstract and Eurocentric. Thus 'freedom' is interpreted as simply implying the freedom to exploit and dominate nature and other humans; fraternity and equality as simply a mask for Eurocentrism and gender hierarchy. To interpret the universalism of the Enlightenment in such a narrow fashion is to completely efface the emancipatory dimensions of both the democratic and socialist traditions. If it was so Eurocentric, why did Toussaint L'Ouverture take up its rallying cry? If the Enlightenment ideals of freedom, equality and fraternity are in essence simply a front for Eurocentrism, gender hierarchy and implicit racism, as Mies and Shiva seem to suggest, it is indeed difficult to understand why Hitler and Mussolini found such ideals so 'loathsome' and disgusting.

As for Marxism, although several generations of anarchists have critiqued the 'productivist', scientistic and authoritarian aspects of Marxism, to imply that the distinction between the economy (life) and the cultural superstructures (consciousness) involves either mechanistic materialism or a reductive analysis: to equate historical or philosophical materialism with consumerism, hedonism and a fetish for commodities; and to assert that Marxism is a 'social constructivist' theory—all represent a highly distorted view of what Marx was trying to accomplish in giving both rationalism and materialism a historical dimension.

Although some telling criticisms are made of the conservative tendency to romanticize nature, folk traditions and the pre-modern, some reviewers have noted a similar tendency within this work, given its emphasis on 'old wisdom', the 'subsistence' economy, and the lingering affirmation of the 'spirit'. However, its overwhelming message is a plea for a perspective that puts a fundamental emphasis on the satisfaction of human needs, not on the generation of profits, on a new paradigm of science that is neither reductionist nor instrumental, and on the establishment of a participatory democracy which involves both women and men. It is a message and vision to be found in such early anarchists as Blake, Carpenter, De Cleyre, Kropotkin and Landauer. And it is one expressed with cogency in these essays. It is a pity, therefore, that in emphasizing a feminist perspective, Mies and Shiva felt the need to rubbish both humanism and socialism, and to ignore entirely the libertarian tradition of anarchism.

■ FUNDAMENTALISM

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The Raven 27 on Religion (2): Fundamentalism
Freedom Press

The term 'fundamentalism' has Christian origins. It was first used in the early part of this century by a group of Christians, focused around the oil millionaire Lyman Stewart, who financed the publication of a serious of religious tracts entitled 'The Fundamentals'. Published between 1910 and 1915 these tracts had a wide circulation, selling over three million copies. Thus emerged the 'fundamentalist' movement within Christianity. It was essentially a reaction against the liberal tendencies within the Christian church, and emphasized a 'return' to fundamentals, a 'back to basics' approach. The movement stressed the literal truth of the Bible, and the fundamental importance of some key doctrines—the virgin birth and the bodily resurrection of Jesus, the authenticity of the miracles that he performed, salvation through Christ, and the imminent second coming of the messiah. Fundamentalism, in its original meaning, was thus a radical reform movement within Christianity, hostile to the compromises that liberal Protestantism had made with secular thought and secular politics.

In recent years, however, the rubric 'fundamentalism' has been applied to a wide variety of social movements that have emerged in many parts of the world—in various religious and social contexts. Sikh fundamentalism in the Punjab, the Opus Dei movement within the Catholic church, Jewish fundamentalism in Israel, Hindu fundamentalism in India, the rise of the 'new Christian right' and the 'Moral Majority' in the United States, as well as the emergence of radical Islam in the countries throughout the Middle East. The concept, in fact, has been used so widely that some sociologists have questioned its utility. Jan Pieterse, for example, completely rejects the concept as it implies an 'essentialising' approach, one which conceals the diversity of the different phenomena and tends to polarise political debate. Thus Islam gets conflated with Islamic fundamentalism—for, in a sense, in believing in the literal truth of the Koran, all Muslims are fundamentalists—and an equation is made between the adherents of Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority and radical Islamic movements like the Mujahidin in Iran, although the political contexts and meanings of these two movements are quite dissimilar.

Many people, nevertheless, have sought to retain 'fundamentalism' as a concept and have suggested ways in which to understand it as a social phenomenon.

In essence, fundamentalism combines two inter-related features. The first is that whatever their social and theological differences—which can be enormous—all fundamentalist movements share a common characteristic: they call for a 'return' to the 'holy texts' (or traditions) which are interpreted in literal fashion as embodying sacred or eternal truths, and these truths are held to be 'absolute', which means they are thought to be of divine or quasi-divine origin.

Thus fundamentalism puts a cardinal emphasis on faith rather than on critical reason.

Secondly, fundamentalism is not simply a defence of tradition or a belief in some sacred text, it implies also a political project, one which aims to win or consolidate power in order to give the religious doctrines social and political expression. It is then essentially a theocratic project, aiming to create, through state power, a religiously sanctioned society. Along with an emphasis on faith, one also finds, therefore, an attitude of intolerance to all those who resist the imposition of the religious doctrines. Fundamentalist movements are, therefore, a serious threat to human well-being, to civil liberties and to human freedom.

If one wishes to get a better understanding of religious fundamentalism in the present context, you can hardly do better than read the current issue of *The Raven* which is devoted to this topic. This is one of the best issues yet, for all the articles are substantive, readable and enlightening. Editors are rather effusive regarding the collections they edit, but in describing this present collection as 'informative' and 'thought-provoking' the editors are close to the mark. The content and style of the articles are, of course, varied, but the collection as a whole has considerable merit.

To begin with, the collection is highly informative, giving a wealth of historical and sociological data on various fundamentalist religious movements. The rise of fundamentalism in Christianity is cogently discussed by three of the contributors—Walter, Barclay and Potter—and John Shotton offers a very interesting, if at times rather dense, discussion of Hinduism. The discussion focuses on the emergence of 'Hinduism' as a conceptual category during the nineteenth century, the diverse forms which this religion has taken over the centuries—Shotton indicated that many Hindu sects were not noted for their religious tolerance—and the emergence of Hindu fundamentalism in recent decades. He emphasizes that this phenomenon is more political than religious, and is supportive of the ambitions of the new powerful middle class with its moorings in urban India—although Shotton has little discussion on Indian politics per se.

Barclay's contribution, in contrast, gives a short but cogent discussion of the self-styled 'Moral Majority', emphasizing its anti-intellectual bias and the fact that its politics are of the Calvinist variety. Such politics suggest that the state's role is to promote 'true religion' and that legislation should reflect 'Christian' teaching. In doing so, the Moral Majority has completely rejected the libertarian tradition in protestantism—espoused by the Anabaptists, Mennonites and Quakers. In the first part of his contribution, Barclay argues that the Roman Catholic Church is also as much a threat to freedom as Protestant fundamentalism. Although not mentioning Opus Dei, Barclay emphasizes the poignant fact that the Catholic Church—that "lamb in adversity"—is not a benign liberal institution; on the contrary, it is a powerful worldwide organisation of enormous wealth and influence, whose core principle, modelled on the Roman Empire, is to centralize power in the hands of a clerical hierarchy, the head of which is an

'infallible' Pope. The authority of the papacy, Barclay outlines, has little scriptural warrant. With its monolithic ideology Catholicism, he argues, is largely a "system of mind control".

Radical Islam per se is not the subject of a sustained discussion—Khomeini is hardly mentioned in the collection—but it is touched upon by several of the contributors, and Barbara Smoker gives a controlled but impassioned critique of the "fundamentalist Muslim agenda" in Britain. This she sees as a serious threat to basic human freedom. In her essay, entitled 'Empowerment of Intimidation', she bewails the way in which well-meaning liberals kowtow to the Islamic fundamentalists. Seeking to impose their own religion precepts on the rest of society and to curb freedom of expression, the "extremist mullahs" do not represent, she argues, the majority of Muslims, and their influence in education and in the field of social legislation must be challenged. Like Nicolas Walter, she strongly argues that the blasphemy law must not be extended to Muslims on the grounds of equity, but completely abolished. Having seen Smoker, with courage, resilience and integrity, debating religious issues with around four hundred hostile Hare Krishna devotees, her encounters with fundamentalist Muslim students—on which she draws for the present contribution—is praiseworthy.

Thus one can learn a lot from these informative essays, but two themes which emerge from the collection are also perhaps worth noting.

The first is that although fundamentalism has a specific meaning we are all, in a wider sense, fundamentalists. As Nicolas Walter suggests, we must all "stand on something", for all systems of belief—including science, rationalism and anarchism—to be coherent, must rest on some axiomatic assumptions, on some basic principles about life and social existence. All who stick to such principles are thus fundamentalists. But what characterises fundamentalism in its more specific sense is that it demands the suspension of critical reason and is based on the unquestioning faith in the authority of sacred texts. It is based, as the late George Walford puts it, on the "belief in the supreme value of authority".

This is brought about with salience in Bob Potter's contribution. This focuses on the Jehovah's Witnesses and on the psychological aspects of fundamentalism. Potter's account of this Christian sect, which he describes as essentially authoritarian, suggests that the fundamentalist individual is a person who is rootless and alienated and feels estranged from society and "the world", who has a fear of uncertainty and chaos, who, though self-centred, is obsessed with their own perceived personal inadequacy and is essentially anti-intellectual. A fundamentalist thus seeks to "confirm his faith, not explore it". Potter even goes so far as to suggest that a fundamentalist is a "psychotic person"—or at least religious visionaries are—which is a debatable issue long ago explored by the likes of William James. But what Potter suggests is that there is a lack of 'critical' thought in such groups as the Jehovah's Witnesses and that these groups offer status, meaning and a "warm social atmosphere" for the insecure individual. The trouble with this kind of psychological analysis, however, is that it

seems to deny that fundamentalist movements—like radical Islam—may in fact constitute a kind of protest against social disadvantage, economic exploitation and state repression that many people experience.

A second theme in the collection emphasizes the fact that fundamentalism is not restricted to religious movements. Walford notes the affinities between religious fundamentalism and political totalitarianism. Potter suggests that as a "style of thinking" fundamentalism may be evident among Marxists, while Ward, in a perceptive discussion, notes that fundamentalist "theology" may well be at work in Thatcherism and "the worship of the market". It is then important to realise that the whole Jacobin tradition in politics, recently discussed by Carl Boggs in his book *Intellectuals and the Crisis of Modernity* (1993), besides being elitist and statist, is essentially "fundamentalist" in orientation. Boggs describes the Bolshevik revolution as "the first true Jacobin conquest of state power" in history, and suggests that the essence of the Jacobin—Promethean—political tradition is the fusion of knowledge and power. It was this Jacobin aspect of Marx that Bakunin criticised so cogently. Thus there are fundamental similarities between neo-liberalism (Thatcherism)—which seeks to impose its technocratic vision and managerial politics on all aspects of social life—the Jacobin political tradition—reflected especially in the statist politics of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, Maoism and the Shining Path—and religious fundamentalism. In the present collection of articles, only religious fundamentalism is highlighted. But the important point is that while religion cannot be equated with fundamentalism—for many anarchists have been religious thinkers—religion seems to be intrinsically connected with fundamentalism. Colin Ward quotes Fatima Nasreen, who said in an interview, "religion gives birth to fundamentalism as surely as the seed gives birth to the tree". Or as Walter puts it, "religion is intrinsically inclined to fundamentalism". But religion only becomes fundamentalism when it is implicated with state power and systems of social control—and this is affirmed by all the contributors to the present volume. As Nicolas Walter writes, Jewish, Christian and Muslim fundamentalists present considerable threats to freedom, not because of their beliefs but because of "their aggressive and intolerant attempt to force their religious doctrines not only on followers of their own religion but on populations around them".

Although there is an important note by Silvia Edwards on the journal *Women Against Fundamentalism*, as well as a short and interesting account by Donald Rooum of the Satanic child abuse cases, one of the limitations of the collection is that issues concerning women and the patriarchal nature of fundamentalism is not given a full discussion. Smoker has some important things to say about civil rights that are often denied women by the Muslim patriarchs, and Ward emphasizes that women are certainly the "first victims" of fundamentalist political regimes, but gender issues tend to be marginal in many of the contributions—which is a pity.

But all in all, this is a usefully, important and engaging collection of essays of religious fundamentalism and well worth getting.

■ TOM PAINE—THE RADICAL LIBERAL

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Thomas Paine was one of the greatest political thinkers Britain has produced. As one of the most noteworthy radical pamphleteers at the end of the eighteenth century, his pamphlets "Common Sense" and "Rights of Man" had a profound and lasting influence. He was a propagandist who was actively involved in revolution in three countries—the United States, Britain and France. Because of his radical view he became the "greatest British exile," and even today his name creates consternation in conservative circles. In 1982, in response to a television program on Paine, the *Daily Telegraphy* described Paine as "the kind of philosopher whose natural forum was the pub" (Powell, 1985; preface). Many have seen Paine as one of the founders of anarchism: Gwyn Williams, (1968, 15) for example deemed "Rights of Man" as "practically anarchist". As a result of this, as Nicolas Walter (1982) writes, Paine has been generally ignored by historians of political thought, and omitted from academic curricula. Apart from a small group of enthusiasts who have kept his memory fresh, Paine has been considered, as Powell poignantly puts it, "little more than a disturbing footnote to English history."

Thomas Paine was born on January 29, 1737 at Thetford in Norfolk. His father was a poor corset maker and a Quaker by religion; his mother was the daughter of an Anglican attorney. After leaving a local school at thirteen, he worked with his father as a staymaker—corsets were an important part of women's clothing. Disenchanted with such tedium, he ran away to sea at sixteen, only to be brought back by his father. When he was nineteen he left home permanently, and served as a merchant seaman. In 1757 he arrived in London and set himself up as a journeyman staymaker; but finding life difficult he moved to Kent and at Sandwich opened a shop of his own. In 1759 he married a local maidservant May Lambert, but she died the following year.

After his business failed, Paine obtained work as an exciseman, that is, a customs official who collected the duties levied on such commodities as brandy, tea, tobacco, and other household goods. In the eighteenth century there was an organized underworld of professional smuggling and it was reckoned that more than twenty thousand men engaged in such activity. Since many contrabandists were armed, the career of an exciseman was not without its dangers. After only a year Paine was dismissed for some minor misconduct: 'stamping' goods without having examined them. He returned to London and worked for a while as a schoolteacher. In 1768 he was reinstated, securing an appointment as exciseman in Lewes, a small town in Sussex renowned for its tradition of radical dissent. It was a secure and sympathetic environment for a nascent radical. He remained in Lewes for the next six years and became actively involved in local government and politics. He regularly attended meetings of the Headstrong Club. At the White Hart Tavern, contemporary social and political issues were hotly debated. He bought books and scientific equipment, attended lectures

wherever possible, and continued his self-education. He was convinced that "every person of learning is finally his own teacher". "I seldom passed five minutes of my life however circumstanced, in which I did not acquire some knowledge." Lacking a university education, his conservative opponents later on never ceased to deride Paine's "immense ignorance." Yet no one who reads Paine can doubt his erudition and scholarship: certainly Condorcet and Jefferson considered him an intellectual equal. He was more than a match for Burke, who has been recently promoted to the pantheon of great political philosophers by both liberal and conservative scholars.

While in Lewes, Paine married Elizabeth Olive, ten years his junior and daughter of a local tobacconist. Paine took over the small tobacco business with Elizabeth. For a short time, everything seemed to be flourishing. In 1772 Paine drafted his first political pamphlet "The Case of the Officers of Excise." It was a plea to Parliament for higher salaries for excisemen. Paine printed four thousand copies, and in the winter of 1772-3 went to London to distribute copies to members of Parliament. From then on Paine's life fell apart. In April 1774 the business in Lewes failed. That same month he lost his job in the excise service, allegedly for leaving his post without the permission of the Board. But it is possible that his dismissal was due to his regard as a troublemaker by the authorities for attempting to organize his fellow excisemen (Foner, 1948). Two months later he and his second wife separated, apparently amicably. It was rumoured that the marriage was never consummated. Bankrupt, without a job, and having failed in marriage, Paine left Lewes in June 1774 for London. He renewed the acquaintance of some of his scientific friends, and one of them game him an introduction to Benjamin Franklin. Franklin, then approaching seventy, gave Paine a letter of introduction to his son-in-law Richard Bache in Philadelphia. He probably also encouraged Paine to emigrate. In September 1774, at the age of thirty-seven, Paine sailed to America to begin a new life.

Arriving in the colonies with Franklin's letter Paine soon obtained employment as managing editor of the *Pennsylvania Magazine*. He quickly made a success of the magazine, making important contributions often under pseudonyms. He wrote one of the earliest articles against slavery. In March 1775, he suggested that the enslavement of African people was analogous to "murder, robbery, lewdness and barbarity," and called upon Americans to denounce it. The article earned Paine much praise, and he quickly gained a wide reputation for his radical views. At the end of the year he wrote another piece which was to have an even more explosive impact. It was a pamphlet entitled "Common Sense," and it was published in January 1776. The struggle between Britain and her American Colonies had been raging since 1763, since the conclusion of the Seven Years War, which had been partly fought on the American Continent. To pay for the expenses of the war and for the administration of the colonies, the British government had imposed new tax levies and customs duties. Tensions between Britain and the colonies had gradually mounted and in 1775 armed conflicts had broken out with the battles of Lexington and Concord. Talk of independence

had been voiced, but had been muted. Paine "broke the ice" and in simple, plain and direct language called on the American people to declare themselves independent of Britain. The pamphlet *Common Sense* became a best-seller overnight, and within a few weeks had sold half a million copies. More than any other single work, Paine's pamphlet set Americans thinking about the possibility and desirability of complete independence. He also denounced the British ruling classes for exploiting the lower classes in Britain and America and scorned the hereditary monarchy. The British monarchy, Paine suggested, was based on force. Much of his indignation was echoed in the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776.

Paine's activities, however, were not confined to journalism. That same month he enlisted in the American army, and became aide-de-camp to General Greene of the Pennsylvania militia. By the end of the year Washington's Army had met with a series of setbacks, such as the defeat at Long Island. Retreating in disarray towards New Jersey, the army's morale was at a low ebb, and even Washington was expressing doubts about their prospects. Demoralized, reduced in numbers, short of supplies, and with little clothing to protect them from the bitter cold, the American cause seemed on the verge of total defeat and humiliation. It was in these circumstances, seated by a campfire near Newark, New Jersey that Paine wrote a series of "Crisis" articles in support of the American cause. The first of these begins with the momentous words:

> "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; But he that stand it *now*, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman."

The words of this pamphlet, circulated by Washington to his army, are said to have inspired them to greater efforts, and on Christmas Eve 1776, in a blizzard, Washington's Army crossed the Delaware River and successfully engaged the enemy at Trenton. It was a turning point of the war: For his services to the 'United States' (a phrase that Paine had coined in one of his *Crisis* papers), Paine was awarded the post of the secretary to the Committee on Foreign Affairs in 1777. He was a consistent supporter for the union as well as for the independence of the colonies. Six years later, at the end of the war, Paine gradually withdrew from politics. Finding himself poverty-stricken he appealed to the government for financial support. Washington, sympathetic to Paine's plight and aware of his contribution towards American independence, wrote to the State Assemblies reminding them of their debt to Paine. New York granted him a farm at New Rochelle. Freed from financial anxieties Paine turned towards science and technology, concentrating his efforts on the design of a single-arched iron bridge. In April 1787 he left America for France, then well-known for progressive inquiries into engineering. He met Jefferson and several members of the French Academy of Science to discuss his bridge project. Then on August 30 he embarked for England.

English radicalism was still gaining momentum. Paine was therefore greeted with enthusiasm by such Whig radicals as Charles James Fox and Edmund Burke, both of whom had supported the American War of Independence. After visiting his mother at Thetford (his father had died of smallpox in November 1786), Paine met both men, and it is of special interest that in early 1788 Paine spent a week with Burke at his country house near Beaconsfield (Powell, 1985). The news of the French revolution the following year filled Paine with joy and exhilaration. He had anticipated this revolution, for he did not regard the American Revolution as a local affair but as one having universal significance. In his "Letter to the Abbe Raynal," a French historian who had written a history of the American Revolution, Paine, seven years earlier, had predicted that the American Revolution would shake Britain and France, until "every corner of the mind is swept of its cobwebs, poison and dust" (Paine, 1987; 164)

Invited by Lafayette and Condorcet, with whom he had established friendships, Paine spent four months in France. "He gave advice on the formation of a constitution, aided in the drawing up the Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen, and witnessed the uprisings of overthrow despotism and feudal privileges" (Foner, 1948; xxvii). He was given the key to the Bastille by Lafayette to present to President Washington. Paine wrote to Washington that "a share in two revolutions is living to some purpose."

Although Paine, Wordsworth, and other British radicals greeted the French Revolution with enthusiasm, the same could not be said for the Whig politician Edmund Burke. Paine was an early admirer of Burke and for his support of the American Revolution had described him as a "friend of mankind." But Burke's vicious attack and denunciation of the French Revolution in a parliamentary speech in February 1790, however, came as a shock to Paine. In November Burke published his famous *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. What seemed to have particularly provoked Burke was a sermon by Richard Price, a dissenting minister and a liberal advocate of parliamentary reform. It had been published and circulated by the Revolution Society, which was founded in 1788 to commemorate the centenary of the English Revolution. In this sermon, Price had claimed that the 1688 Revolution had given the people of England the right to choose its governors, as well as the right "to cashier them for misconduct," and he applauded the recent developments in France. Burke could not tolerate such incendiary ideas. In his *Reflections* the French Jacobins and their English sympathizers are attacked. Written in the form of a letter to a "gentleman in Paris" Burke expressed his fear of revolution. He wrote that he would:

> Suspend my congratulations on the new liberty of France, until I was informed how it had been combined with government; with public force; with the discipline and obedience of armies; with the collection of an effective and well-distributed revenue; with morality and religion; with the solidity of property; with peace and order, with civil and social manners. (1790; 90-91)

Burke's famous work has been traditionally regarded as a manifesto of conservative reaction. He bewailed the fact that the Jacobin revolutionaries expressed no respect for the time-honoured institutions such as the aristocracy, the Church and the Monarchy, and he stressed the supreme importance of the social "inheritance from our forefathers." Society and government, he argued could not be torn down and built anew according to some blueprint—they were the product of past generations, and had to be preserved intact. Burke feared the destruction of the Church, of tradition, the family and of the confiscation of property. The defence of property, David Powell suggests, was the pivot and consequently had "one, overriding goal-to alert Europe to the dangers of revolution and, thus, mobilize the forces of counter-revolution" (1985; 179). Burke's *Reflections*, it has to be noted, were written three years before the terror and the Jacobin dictatorship of 1793.

Karl Marx described Burke as a sycophant and as a "commonplace bourgeois" to the very marrow. He suggested that he had not only been in the pay of the American colonists in opposing the English oligarchy, but was later in the pay of this same oligarchy in attacking the French Revolution. He quotes Burke as suggesting that "the laws of commerce are the laws of nature, and therefore the laws of god" and remarks that it is no wonder that he always sold himself in the best market (1957; 843). There appears to be no evidence for the first of these charges, but the British establishment rewarded Burke by giving him a civil pension in 1795. But Ayer (1988) is probably quite right in suggesting that Burke's hostility to the revolution was genuine.

The importance of Burke's *Reflections* lies not in what it says, which as a political treatise has been somewhat overrated; but rather in the storm it created from the left: Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (the first sustained argument for female emancipation); William Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (first work of modern philosophical anarchism) and Tom Paine's *The Rights of Man*. The first part of the *Rights of Man* was published as a pamphlet in February 1791, and carries the subtitle "An Answer to Mr Burke's Attack on the French Revolution." Paine's friends—William Godwin, Thomas Hollis, and Thomas Holcroft—assisted in its publication. The pamphlet was an instant success and within a few weeks over fifty thousand copies had been sold. Paine had become a popular hero. The following year Paine published Part Two of *Rights of Man*, which contains a detailed exposition of Paine's political philosophy, and views on government and society. Part Two had an even greater success and sold hundreds of thousands of copies. Although living in poverty, Paine gave its royalties to the London Constitutional Society, so that the book could be distributed more widely. Extracts from Paine's writing were also published in popular pamphlets, which were published under such titles as "Hog's Wash," "Pigs Meat," "Mast and Acorns Collected by Old Hubert" graced its covers. The titles alluded to Burke's disparaging remarks about working people whom he referred to as "The Swinish Multitude." Paine's writings must have been read by millions. It has been described as the foundation text

of the English working-class movement (Thompson, 1963; 98-99).

With the publication of cheap editions of the *Rights of Man* in 1792, and with a growing radical movement, the Pitt government decided to act. At first Pitt tried to prevent publication of "Part Two" by bribing the publisher, but when this failed the government sponsored a slanderous biography of Paine. In May 1792 a Royal Proclamation against seditious writings was issued, and in June Paine was charged with sedition. His trial was set for December 18. Meanwhile, in September, Paine made a revolutionary speech at the Society of the "Friends of Liberty." Government agents were in the audience, and Paine was warned by his friend William Blake that arrest was likely and that he should leave London. He sailed from Dover only twenty minutes before the warrant for his arrest arrived. In December Paine's *Rights of Man* was prosecuted; Paine was found guilty of seditious libel and forbidden from returning to Britain. Paine was to remain in France for the next ten years.

Although denounced by the British government as a "wicked seditious and ill-disposed" person, he was welcomed in France as a celebrity. He was elected to represent the Calais region in the National Assembly, and in October 1792 he was appointed to the Committee of Nine to frame the new French constitution. In Britain Paine had been identified as an extreme radical, however, he was associated in France with the moderately Republican Girondins. He opposed the execution of Louis XVI. In an address to the Assembly he pleaded for the King's life. He agreed with Robespierre that the death penalty should be abolished, and argued that Louis, for all his faults, had "aided my much-loved America to break its chains." His opposition to the King's execution made him suspect to the Jacobins. In October 1793 most of his Girondin associates were tried and executed, and Paine almost suffered the same fate. Two months later, he was arrested, and spent ten months in prison. He was released after the fall of the Jacobin dictatorship in November 1794. While in prison Paine had nearly died of an internal ulcer, and was seriously ill. He was eventually released, mainly through the offices of the American Minister, James Monroe. The horror of the prison experience and the Terror had a profound effect on Paine: reason itself seemed upended. During his recuperation, in Monroe's residence, Paine finished *The Age of Reason*. Paine was then (1794) fifty-seven years of age. The book represents the results of years of study and reflection on the place of religion in society. It offers both a critique of organized religion, including Christianity, and a plea for deism. Paine was no atheist, but believed in one God, and suggested that "My own mind is my own Church." All religious institutions he contended were human inventions "set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit." Jesus Christ he felt was simply a virtuous and amiable man who preached and practiced a benevolent morality similar to that of Confucius. The *Age of Reason*, Walter suggests, became one of the main texts of a radical critique of orthodox religion and the established churches. Its publishers were prosecuted for blasphemous libel for several decades.

In December 1794 Paine was re-elected to the French Assembly, but he took little part in further political activity. He did write one more important political work, *Agrarian Justice* (1796), before he returned to America in 1802. He lived quietly on his small farm at New Rochelle until his death in June 1809. Because of his radical religious views Paine was ostracized and looked upon by most Americans as evil incarnate. His exploits on behalf of American independence, thirty years before, had long been forgotten. Like Rousseau he became a cantankerous lonely man with no family and few close friends in his old age. He spent his last years in poverty and his funeral was attended by only five people: Margaret Bonneville, a Catholic woman who had cared for him in his later years, her son, a Quaker friend and two blacks. As the earth tumbled into the grave Bonneville exclaimed, "Oh! Mr. Paine! My son stands here as testimony of the gratitude of America, and I, for France!"

But Paine was not allowed to rest in peace. In 1819 William Cobbett attempted to bring Paine's bones back to England; but they were somehow lost on the voyage.

Paine has been regarded as one of the founders of anarchist philosophy. While Paine laid some of the foundations of anarchist theory, particularly in articulating the fundamental distinction between Society and the State (which had been conflated by Rousseau) Paine was not himself an anarchist or socialist. In the opening paragraphs of *Common Sense* Paine offers a poignant account of the relationship between government and society. He writes:

> Some writers have so confounded society with government, as to leave little or no distinction between them; whereas they are not only different but have different origins. Society is produced by our wants and government by our wickedness; the former promotes our happiness *positively* by uniting our affections, the latter *negatively* by restraining our vices…
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> Society in every state is a blessing, but government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil; but in its worst state an intolerable one…. Government, like dress, is the badge of lost innocence; the palaces of Kings once built upon the ruins of the bowers of paradise. For were the impulses of conscience clear, uniform and irresistibly obeyed, man would need no other law-giver; but that not being the case, he finds it necessary to surrender up a part of his property to furnish means for the protection of the rest…. Wherefore, security being the true design and end of government, it unanswerably follows that whatever form thereof appears most likely to ensure it to us, with the least expanse and greatest benefit, is preferably to all others (Foner, 1948; 4-5).

This is a classical example of radical bourgeois liberalism. The same theme is taken up in the Second Part of *Rights of Man*. In the opening chapter, entitled "On Society and Civilization," Paine writes

> Great part of that order which reigns among mankind is not the effect of government. It had its origin in the principles of society and the natural constitution of the man. It existed prior to government, and would exist if the formality of government was abolished. The mutual dependence and reciprocal interest which man has upon man create the great chain of connection which holds it together. The landholder, the farmer, the manufacturer, the merchant, the tradesman, and every occupation, prospers by the aid which each receives from the other, and from the whole. Common interest regulates their concerns, and forms their laws… In time, society performs for itself almost everything which is ascribed to government.

He goes on to suggest the inherent social nature of the human subject, and the limited need for government.

> If we examine, with attention, into the composition and constitution of man, the diversity of his wants, and the diversity of talents in different men for reciprocally accommodating the wants of each other, his propensity to society… we shall easily discover that a great part of what is called government is mere imposition.
> Government is no farther necessary than to supply the few cases to which society and civilization are not conveniently competent; and instances are not wanting to show, that everything which government can usefully add thereto, has been performed by the common consent of Society, without government (Foner, pp.357-8).

During the American War of Independence there were no established forms of government and yet order and harmony still prevailed: "The instant formal government is abolished, society begins to act."

> "The more perfect civilization is, the less occasion has it for government, because the more does it regulate its own affairs, and govern itself…
> All the great laws of Society are laws of nature. Those of trade and commerce, whether with respect to the intercourse of individuals, or of nations, are laws of mutual and reciprocal interest. They are followed and obeyed because it is in the interest of parties so to do, and not on account of any formal laws their governments may impose or interpose (Foner, 358-9).

It follows that Paine rigorously opposed all forms of hereditary government. He viewed the English monarchy as having been founded by "bands of robbers" who took control by violence and "parcelled out the world." Kings and aristocrats were unproductive parasites, "drones… who neither collect honey nor form the hive, but exist only for lazy enjoyment" (Foner, p. 412). The British monarch had little to do but make war and impoverish the nation, and was paid eight hundred thousand sterling a year to do so. "Of more worth

is one honest man to Society, and in the sight of God, than all the crowned ruffians that ever lived."

Like Rousseau, Paine regarded an "original simple democracy" as the ideal form of government though he argued that its form was inadequate for modern conditions. He thus came to advocate a republican form of government, based on a representative system. "Retaining, then, democracy as the ground, and rejecting the corrupt systems of monarchy and aristocracy, the representative system naturally presents itself; remedying at once the defects of simple democracy as to form, and the incapacity of the other two with respect to knowledge" (Foner, p.371). Paine went further than advocating a parliamentary democracy, he also outlined the basis for a welfare state. He suggested plans for popular education, pensions for aged people, grants to women immediately after the birth of a child and for young people on marriage, for state employment, and lodging houses for unemployed men. The revenue for this welfare program was to be funded by a progressive system of income tax. His own sentiments on the issue of state welfare is cogently expressed in the following often quoted lines.

> When it shall be said in any country in the world, "My poor are happy; neither ignorance nor distress is to be found among them; my jails are empty of prisoners, my streets of beggars; the aged are not in want, the taxes are not oppressive…" When these things can be said, then may that country boast of its constitution and its government (Foner, p.446).

Paine's radical egalitarianism, and his advocacy of a republic based on representative democracy, did not imply an acceptance of socialism. In fact, his writings suggest an acceptance of laissez-faire economics. As with Adam Smith and other liberal economists Paine regarded civil society as consisting of atomistic individuals engaged in economic transactions which were mutually beneficial, without the need of a coercive state. In the second part he wrote:

> In all my publications….. I have been an advocate of commerce, because I am a friend to its effects. It is a pacific system, operating to unite mankind by rendering nations, as well as individuals, useful to each other…. If commerce were permitted to act to the universal extent it is capable of, it would exterminate the system of war, and produce a revolution in the uncivilized state of governments…. Commerce is no other than the traffic of two individuals, multiplied on a scale of numbers; and by the same rule that nature intended the intercourse of two, she intended that of all (Foner, 1948; p.400).

Much like Adam Smith and the Physiocrat Turgot, Paine viewed laissez-faire economics as a natural phenomena as "most beneficial" both to the individual and the nation, and as being unconnected with imperialist ventures. "Commerce needs no other protection than the reciprocal interest which every

nation feels in supporting it—it is common stock—it exists by a balance of advantages to all" (Foner, p.403). The state, therefore, though seen by Paine as having specific functions in the provision of health, education and security, must be separated from commercial activities. Its objective is simply the "good of all"—individually and collectively.

> Every man wishes to pursue his occupation and enjoy the fruits of his labours, and the produce of his property, in peace and safety, with the least possible expense, when these things are accomplished, all the objects for which government ought to be established are answered (Foner, p.388).

Property was seen by Paine as one of the natural rights of humankind, as it was to both the Jacobins and the Girondins. Thus Paine was not a socialist, if socialism is understood in terms of the communal ownership of the means of production. Yet, given his strident opposition to the landed aristocracy and landed interest, Paine, in his *Agrarian Justice* was highly critical of private property in land. He drew a distinction between natural property—earth, air, water—and acquired property, the latter being the invention of humans. Since the earth was considered to be "the common property of the human race" he argued that every proprietor of cultivated lands "owes to the community *a ground rent* (for I know no better term to express the idea) for the land which he holds." This rent could provide the basis of the various welfare programs that Paine advocated. This idea of a land tax was later developed by Henry George in his popular work *Progress and Poverty* (1879).

Paine was a radical liberal. He was, as said, neither an anarchist nor a socialist. He never proposed the abolition or restriction of private property, except to the extent this was involved in his tax proposals. Socialism could be identified with the welfare state then, as G.D.H. Cole writes, Paine can be acclaimed as its first practical policy-maker (1953, p.33). Paine expressed no awareness that capitalism was itself inherently exploitative generating social and economic inequalities. Burke, for all his limitations, at least saw that it was "the characteristic essence of property, formed out of the combined principles of its acquisition and conservation, is to be *unequal*" (1790, p.140). He simply defended such inequalities as in the interest of the social whole. Paine was blind to the problems of laissez-faire economics with its associated wars, imperialism, and misguided monarchs. He also, like Rousseau (but without the metaphysics of a general will), had faith in a government that would represent the interests of the whole community.

> My idea of a simple legislative was always founded on a hope that whatever personal parties there might be in the state, they would all unite and agree in the general principles of good government—that these party differences would be dropped at the threshold of the state house, and that the public good, or the good of the whole, would be the governing principle of the legislative within it (1987, p.196).

Within the context of a bourgeois society such a hope was a forlorn one. It was left to his friend, William Godwin, to draw out the more anarchistic implications of the *Rights of Man*. Nevertheless, Paine's political legacy is essentially a positive one, and of enduring significance. "My country is the World," he asserted, "and my religion is to do good" (Foner, 1948, p.414).

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■ THE ROLE OF THE INTELLECTUAL

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Anarchists have always expressed a healthy scepticism towards intellectuals. Bakunin long ago argued against, not science, but the kind of scientific socialism advocated by Marx, suggesting that this implied rule by an intellectual or bureaucratic elite. He concluded that "the organisation and the rule of the New Society by socialist savants is the worst of all despotic governments". Science, he felt, though indispensable for the rational organisation of society and human well-being, must, nonetheless, be kept in check, for the "domination of life by science can have no other result than the brutalisation of mankind" (Dolgoff, 1973, pages 295 and 327).

In their original meanings—both terms came into use towards the end of the nineteenth century—the terms 'intellectual' and 'intelligentsia' were neutral words or had radical connotations. Emile Zola, who defended Dreyfus against the prosecution of the French state, was disparagingly described as an 'intellectual', while 'intelligentsia' was associated with the Narodniks, radical intellectuals who opposed both capitalism and the Tsarist regime in Russia. But in recent years this kind of critical intellectual has disappeared, or become marginalised, or has been transformed into an academic or a technocratic type of intellectual. And a wealth of texts have thus emerged on the role of the intellectual—and their various guises. This essay is devoted to a critical review of some of this literature.

In a brilliant, exciting and strident analysis of American cultural life, Russell Jacoby (1987) has bewailed the demise of the radical intellectual. The habitat—urban bohemia—character, and idiom of American intellectuals, has, he argues, been fundamentally transformed over the past fifty years. Critical intellectuals, scholars like Lewis Mumford, Dwight MacDonald, Wright Mills, Paul Baran and Murray Bookchin, scholars who were critically engaged in the political life of the wider society and who wrote in a 'public prose' that reached a wide audience, are now disappearing from the cultural scene. They are, he comments, today becoming an "endangered species". He thus entitles his book *The Last Intellectuals*. Intellectuals are no longer "free spirits" in Nietzsche's sense: they have become academics, almost exclusively professors. He writes of the new intellectuals:

> Campuses are their homes; colleagues their audience; monographs and specialised journals their media. Unlike past intellectuals they situate themselves with fields and disciplines—for good reason. Their jobs, advancement and salaries depend on the evaluation of specialists (1987, p. 6).

Independent intellectuals are thus dying out; their place is being taken by academic specialists who write in obscurantist jargon and with elitist pretensions. Marxist scholars are particularly prone to this academic fetish and have a "penchant for bloodless schemata" and "post-structuralist" meta-interpretations. The

latter are quite divorced from empirical research, concentrating on texts, signs and signifiers. Jacoby has a refreshing critique of the literary pretensions of that doyen of Marxist cultural studies, Frederic Jameson. He points out that in his eulogy of the Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles, as an example of 'post-modernism', Jameson quite overlooked the fact that its postmodern 'hyperspace' was specifically designed to keep out the local population, predominantly poor and Hispanic people (1987, page 171). In contrast, Jacoby writes glowingly of the engaged, committed and readable scholarship of Wright Mills, Mumford and Bookchin.

Camille Paglia's critique of the American 'academic', entitled *Junk Boards and Corporate Raiders*, presents an even more disparaging portrait of the American intellectual. Paglia's essays are strident, passionate, arresting, full of invective, to the extent that she's often downright abusive of other scholars, and she has a strong sense of her own importance. Some would describe her as arrogant. Her description of the contemporary 'academe' in the United States is totally dismissive. It is said to be dominated by "conformism and empty pieties" (p. 247) and to be inhabited by "poseurs", "born-yesterday French-besotted faddists" and "privileged opportunists, scholars who, like businessmen, are "mobile merchants on the make". Academic scholarship is now akin to "yuppie entrepreneurship"; the university like a "wasteland where wolves run free", a 'fast-track' where unbridled greed for fame and power has all the characteristics of Wall Street (p. 191). The primary causes of the 'corruption' of the academic profession during the last two decades Paglia puts down to the development of the conference circuit and the invasion of the American academe by French postmodernism. With regard to the latter, American intellectuals, particularly feminists and Marxists, have, she suggests, been completely besotted and misled by a group of French intellectuals—Foucault, Lacan and Derrida—whom Paglia describes in disapproving terms as the "real fossilised reactionaries of our time" (p. 210). Paglia pours scorn on all their basic notions: the "decentred" subject who is simply an 'effect' of power/knowledge or the 'symbolic'; the idea that "sexuality is a modern invention"; the complete exclusion of nature, biology and psychology from their writings; as well as on their obscurantist jargon. Lacan wrote "gibberish" that seems to have turned many feminist brains to pudding, she suggests (p. 262); Derrida's method of deconstruction is "masturbation without pleasure" (p. 241); while Foucault is described as an "absolute ninny" who represents the final decadence of Western rationalism—"a cold desiccated fetishism" that is divorced from humour, compassion, ethics, eroticism and wisdom. Writing in a rather chauvinistic fashion she suggests that it is "revolting to see pampered American academics down on their knees kissing French bums"—the "wordsmiths" Lacan, Derrida and Foucault (p. 211).

Paglia critiques the "yuppification" of academia, and makes a plea for a broad liberal scholarship that includes science, comparative religion, anthropology, history and psychology. The present system, she concludes, is producing "careerist academics" rather than scholars and intellectuals (p. 235).

There is a good deal of substance in Paglia's critique, for academic scholarship on this side of the Atlantic, has been equally beguiled by French obscurantist texts, much of it misunderstood re-hash in language that borders on gibberish, of Nietzsche's essential thoughts. But Paglia is no radical—she applauds American capitalism for its efficiency and for making her "the freest woman in history" (p. 246).

Another writer who has bewailed what is happening to American intellectual life—American universities in particular—is Allan Bloom. But as a conservative scholar what Bloom laments is the fact that universities are no longer elite enclaves where aristocratic recluses can live the comfortable, detached life of a traditional scholar—upholding and exploring the virtues of the American way-of-life. The latter of course revolve around private property, capitalism and the United States constitution. Both Jacoby and Bloom have a nostalgia for a past intellectual tradition: Jacoby for the radical scholar working outside the university setting, Bloom for the American equivalent of the cloistered Oxbridge scholar. Both types, it would appear, now seem to be marginalised. But for Bloom it is cultural relativism, the "education of openness" and the anthropologists and the progressives who have undermined beliefs in American democracy. And, as Bloom writes, "the United States is one of the highest and most extreme achievements of the rational quest for the good life according to nature. What makes its political structure possible is the use of the rational principles of natural right to found a people, thus uniting the good with one's own" (1987, p. 39).

If one reads the refreshing histories of the United States by Zinn (1980), Chomsky (1993) and C.L.R. James (1993) one soon realises that the adoration of the American democratic ideal hardly matches the realities of American political life—the genocide of Native American people, the upholding of slavery until the civil war, and a foreign policy that upholds what Chomsky calls the "fifth freedom" of the US constitution, namely the freedom of US state power to construct a global system in which US-based corporations can operate freely, and in which human and material resources can be exploited for their benefit.

Intellectuals, of course, are not a new phenomena. They have been around since history began. Shamans, diviners and herbalists were in a sense intellectuals, articulating through their therapeutic procedures, cosmological frameworks and aetiological schemas. Both Pythagoras and Plato, two founders of Western philosophy, were kind of shamans, and the whole idea of an ontological realm independent and prior to the empirical world of becoming, has religious roots. The Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci, argued that every person is an intellectual, but that not everyone in society "functions" as an intellectual. He distinguished between two types of intellectuals: the "traditional" and the "organic" intellectual. The first type were predominant in pre-capitalist societies; they were the clerics, priests and scholars who monopolised the dominant forms of discourse and were the "bearers", as literati, of the cultural "world views", the various hegemonic ideologies that justified aristocratic power and dynastic rule.

The Brahmin priest, the Confucian scholar, the Islamic ulama and the Catholic monk were typical 'traditional' intellectuals. Although articulating transcendental or religious values, and appearing to be detached from class interests, Gramsci suggests that they were in fact not completely autonomous from class interests. Nevertheless, critical elements often emerged within this 'traditional' intellectual strata, often challenging the status quo.

The second type of intellectual suggested by Gramsci was the 'organic' intellectuals, who were directly connected with class interests. Such intellectuals could be closely associated with radical or working class movements, or form a technocratic elite that served capitalist interests. The latter thus came to perform a vital function in bolstering state power and maintaining corporate class domination. Organic intellectuals are therefore essentially of two types: critical and technocratic.

In his lucid discussion of intellectuals and the crisis of modernity, Carl Boggs (1993) discusses a fourth type of intellectual—distinct from the traditional, technocratic and critical types—the intellectual Jacobin. This kind of intellectual had its origins in the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, and is seen by Boggs as deeply embedded in the Western intellectual tradition. As he writes, "From Plato to Machiavelli to Hobbes, the leitmotif of political theory was often 'Jacobin' insofar as it looked to the supreme role of intellectuals in shaping political outcomes in determining the course of history" (1993, p. 15). Central to the 'Jacobin' image was the role of the intellectual as a 'Promethean' figure, as an agent in social transformation. The intellectual thus plays a key role in creating and sustaining ideological hegemony, and in initiating radical social change or revolution. The Jacobin style of politics is therefore fundamentally elitist and statist, and as Boggs recognises, it was critiqued long ago by Bakunin and other anarchists. Author of an important and substantial study of Gramsci (1984)—which offers a searching critique of Gramsci's thoughts on the role of the intellectual—Boggs gives, in his more recent study, an excellent outline and critique of Jacobinism, whose prototype figures are Rousseau, Mazzini, Saint-Simon, Herzen and of course Lenin. The Bolshevik revolution, he suggests, is arguably "the first true Jacobin conquest of state power in European history" (1993, p. 35). While Bakunin essentially interpreted Marx as a Jacobin intellectual in his emphasis on scientific socialism and in his advocacy of statist politics, Boggs sees Marx's legacy as an ambiguous and divided one. Thus, within classical Marxism, he suggests, there emerge two distinct traditions, and thus two divergent and contradictory views on the role of the intellectual. One emphasises the "primacy of mass self-activity" and of factory councils, which he associates with the writings of Gorter and Pannekoek (which Boggs refers to as Spontaneism), the other advocates a state-centred politics, a Jacobin approach to revolutionary transformation. This approach Boggs refers to as Vanguardism, and is typified by Lenin and the Bolsheviks who linked, as a political strategy, the Jacobin role of intellectuals with a centralised, disciplined vanguard party. As with Bakunin, Boggs suggests that this style of politics inevitably gives rise to

"a New System of domination—namely bureaucratic centralism—with Marxism as its main legitimating ideology" (1993, page 61). As the Jacobin side of classical Marxism became dominant—and found expression in the Soviet Union, China and Cuba—so the 'spontaneist' side of Marxist theory became increasingly marginalised, surviving mainly as a "nostalgic and suppressed heritage" (p. 62).

Luxembourg, Lukacs and Gramsci all offered critiques of the Jacobin conception of politics and of the intellectual, but none of these Marxist intellectuals could bring themselves to abandon the Leninist conception of the Party, and the role of the intellectual as a Jacobin scholar—as a "Modern Prince" in Gramsci's terms. Among Western Marxists, even within a university setting, Marxism, Boggs suggests, has usually followed a "Jacobin logic" (p. 61).

From the beginning of the nineteenth century there has been a long and diverse 'anti-Jacobin' tradition, not only among anarchists but among liberal and conservative intellectuals. Edmund Burke was one of the more famous of the conservative critics of Jacobin intellectuals; Paul Johnson (1988) is the latest among them. Johnson bewails the increasing influence of secular intellectuals—whether deist, sceptic or atheist—who, since the demise of the cleric intellectual at the end of the eighteenth century, are seen as dominating cultural life. The intellectual Johnson perceives as a 'radical', a person who has a "special devotion to the interests of humanity", who is critical of the status quo and thus, like a pontiff, tells us how best we may conduct our affairs. They have, he suggests, an "evangelical duty" to advance or improve human life by their teaching. Johnson thus narrowly conceives 'intellectuals' as secular radicals, and as Jacobins. Their hero, he writes, "was Prometheus, who stole the celestial fire and brought it to earth" (1988, p. 2). He thus gives some refreshing and readable portraits of such intellectuals as Rousseau, Shelley, Marx, Ibsen, Tolstoy, Hemingway, Brecht, Russell, Sartre and Chomsky, focussing on their biography. He highlights the fact that although such figures were keen to critique their society and to freely offer "advice to humanity", their own lives, strange as it may seem, were not those of a saint but rather like that of an ordinary mortal—full of contradictions, foibles, petty hatreds, moral weakness, egoism, family quarrels, guilt and confusion. Although the book is on 'intellectuals' it has little in the way of intellectual critique, and little intellectual substance. One wonders why he did not subject intellectuals like Burke, Smith, Popper, Hayek, Schweitzer and Ayn Rand to a similar treatment? Johnson himself is an ardent supporter of Thatcherism, which combines arrogant nationalism, authoritarian politics and the so-called 'new liberalism'—an advocacy of nineteenth century laissez-faire capitalism—as well as of US imperialism. He seems unaware that many of the intellectuals he discusses were anti-statist and thus not Jacobin intellectuals or followers of Prometheus; that radical intellectuals do not dominate the cultural landscape but tend to be marginal or to be dismissed as eccentric figures, and that since the end of the nineteenth century there has been a proliferation of intellectuals who are neither clerics nor secular radicals, but academics

or technocrat intellectuals. The latter function to provide ideological support for the status quo. Such technocratic intellectuals dominate the 'culture of capitalism' and come in all shapes and sizes—as media figures (like Johnson himself), as academics, as research scientists, as economists, as management consultants, they often take on the guise—or rather disguise—of being 'experts', whose expertise Brian Martin (1991) has sought to challenge and discredit. 'Scientific' experts, in particular, have come to be seen as the 'new priests' of modern society. In his focus on secular radicals, Johnson seems to be oblivious as to what is going on in contemporary intellectual life. Boggs has emphasised that the essence of the Jacobin—Promethean—tradition is a close relationship between intellectuals and the state apparatus, involving a "fusion of intellect and politics, knowledge and power, vision and development" (1993, p. 16). The real Jacobin intellectuals these days are not the likes of Chomsky but Muslim fundamentalists and the Thatcherite intellectuals (like Johnson) who seek to impose by authoritarian means their technocratic vision and managerial politics on all areas of social life.

Carl Boggs writes that modern intellectuals have lost their "global Promethean capacity" to reshape society and to transform human beings in accordance with some Platonic—or Marxist?—vision. It is doubtful outside of fascist or Marxist states if Jacobin intellectuals ever had this kind of power. But with the rise of modernity, Boggs suggests, we have seen the 'waning' of both the traditional (classical scholar, philosophical cleric and literary figure) and the Jacobin intellectual, and the emergence of a new kind of organic intellectual, the technocratic intellectual. The ideal of a self-contained community of scholars within the university setting, devoted to liberal scholarship and humanism (as celebrated by Bloom), has virtually disappeared, he suggests, to be replaced by a technocrat who, in various ways, seems to legitimate the "smooth functioning of bureaucratic state capitalism and other forms of industrial society. They are located in the state bureaucracy, university, corporations, the military, the media and the culture industry" (1993, p. 3). Higher education is fully integrated, he argues, into this corporate-state network, and essentially serves capitalist interests. The notion that the university is an isolated realm of learning is largely a myth, for academics are subordinate to the imperatives of the power structure (p. 103).

What then Boggs sees as emerging is a new intellectual culture, based on scientific-technological rationality, which is serving to unify an elite of technocratic intellectuals comprised of technicians, marketing experts, economic consultants, corporate managers, psychiatrists, health-care administrators, as well as university academics. He thus concludes that the modern university is:

> the locus of state-corporate management of education that administers and controls the production of knowledge. Virtually all forms of scholarship are saturated with a positivist world-view corresponding to this highly rationalised system (1993, p. 111).

One could well argue that, rather than replacing the Jacobin intellectual, the technocratic intellectual is the archetypal development of this earlier type—concerned with professionalism, bureaucratic control and with mystifying and depoliticising public discourse—often via the esoteric language which Paglia and Jacoby have critiqued. Political science, for example, has increasingly reduced the study of politics, to games theory, rational choice models, and has made a fetish of statistical techniques, about voting behaviour, interest groups and policy-making procedures, even of slavery. A survey of top academic journals in sociology and political science has revealed that very few articles addressed serious political issues and social events—like the war in Vietnam (P. Jacoby, 1987, p. 158; Boggs, 1993, p. 115).

As Marxism has moved back into the university setting and developed into an academic discipline, it has lost, Boggs argues, much of its critical thrust, while continuing to contain within it a theoretical 'mirror image' of capitalist productive relations. And it carries forward, he writes, all the elements of bourgeois industrialism—the fetishism of economic growth, technological rationality and a productivist ethic with its emphasis on control over nature. Marxism thus still lacks "an ecological, feminist and democratic critique of the advanced industrial order" (1993, p. 127)—thus reiterating a critique of Marxism earlier developed by anarchists like Bookchin and Clark.

Yet, significantly, though Boggs distances himself from the Jacobin strand of Marxism—developed by Lenin—and is sympathetic to what he describes as 'spontaneism' (anarchism, syndicalism, council communism), he still retains and advocates a crucial role for intellectuals in counter-hegemonic movements. He writes that "clearly no revolutionary movement hoping to conquer power and initiate fundamental social change could succeed without the leading, educating and organising role of intellectual-activists" (p. 61).

He thus retains an adherence to Gramsci's Marxism but apparently without the advocacy of a revolutionary party. Anarchists, of course, question the very notion that popular movements need to be 'led' or 'organized' by an intellectual elite, and do not seek to 'conquer power' but to dissolve it through what Boggs describes "worker self-activity", "direct democracy" and "collective self-emancipation".

But although Boggs acknowledges that the logic of instrumental rationality is hegemonic, and that centralised forms of power have penetrated all aspects of social life, this does not imply, he argues, that such technocratic ideology is monolithic. Through funding councils, the state has increasingly bureaucratised academic life, and disciplinary power, systems of surveillance and management styles and values now permeate university institutions (Shore and Roberts, 1995) such that the majority of academics now begin to think like bureaucrats with their emphasis on control and management, and to behave like experts—"accomplices in the exercise of power" (Boggs 1993, p. 112). Thus Boggs argues the need to develop a critical intelligentsia, a counter-hegemonic stratum of intellectuals that will be organically linked to popular social movements—those

focused around feminism, gay rights, ecological issues, democratic empowerment, community and anarchism. Drawing on the work of the critical theorists and the writings to Chomsky, Bookchin and Gouldner, Boggs emphasises both the possibility and the need to develop among intellectuals a "culture of critical discourse"—a discourse that will counter and challenge the technocratic drift of much intellectual life—which increasingly is making a fetish of expertise in its subservience to corporate and governmental power. In this Boggs is reaffirming the stance taken by Wright Mills, critical theorists Chomsky, and, more recently, Edward Said.

Chomsky (1987) has long critiqued the role of intellectuals in the United States. Although tending to adopt critical and liberal attitudes, and to assume the role of independent scholars, many US intellectuals—the "new mandarins" as Chomsky describes them—are ready to serve as ideologists, functioning to bolster corporate and state interests. Chomsky calls for a committed scholarship and repudiates the idea that knowledge and understanding is the preserve of intellectuals and experts. Specialist knowledge may be important in certain fields, but the understanding of social life is open to everyone. To unmask political ideologies, he writes, all that is needed is open-mindedness, healthy scepticism and normal common sense.

In a similar vein Edward Said critiques the cult of the expert—for 'expertise', he writes, has very little to do with real knowledge. He calls instead for the critical intellectual to be a kind of 'amateur', an 'exile', a committed scholar who resists the pressures of patronage and authority. In a world crowded with intellectuals—professionals, experts, consultants—the true 'intellectuals', Said suggests, are those who question patriotic nationalism, corporate thinking and privileges of any kind (class, gender, race), and who in taking a principled stand "speak the truth to power" (1994, p. 71).

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■ IN DEFENCE OF LITERACY

Originally published in *Freedom* (1995)

Dear Editors,
I was much stimulated by Denis Pym's thoughtful reflections (22nd July) on my article, and on the role of the intellectual. I note that he would like my own experiences and opinions to be made more explicit. The truth is that I have never considered myself an intellectual, but here goes.

I had the good fortune—or misfortune (depending on how you look at it)—of failing my 11-plus. I was thus considered incapable of abstract thought. I was however introduced to the kind of practical skills that Denis clearly admires over literacy and was given a vocational education—of the sort that is now being re-introduced into schools. I therefore spent many hours as a young lad chiselling bits of wood, working on a lathe, constructing a one-valve radio set, doing sheet metalwork, bookbinding and making detailed drawings of bits of machinery. In my final year at school I spent half a day each week at what was called the 'forge'. We all pretended to be blacksmiths, messing about with bits of wrought iron and making endless brackets and pokers. There was not much else we could make, as horses were on the way out. I was really good at the forge. Unlike my mates, I soon gleaned that you can do anything with iron if you get it hot enough—red hot that is. It was no good sticking your bit of metal at the edge of the coke, it had to go right into the middle of the furnace. This meant plunging your head and body deep into the sulphurous fumes. You've no idea what weird shapes went under the name of 'poker'. In retrospect, I have to admit that the only occupation in which I have ever displayed exceptional talent and skill was at the forge. Denis, I really should have become a blacksmith. Alas, I left school at fifteen barely literate and went to work in an iron foundry just like me Dad. He was less literate than I was and could barely read and write, so he spent his leisure hours drinking beer, playing dominoes, messing around with clock parts and talking to pigeons.

Now, unlike Denis I'm quite keen on literacy because as a teenager I developed a real love of books and writing. The first article I ever wrote was on 'Bird Migration'. I've been writing ever since, on anything that strikes my fancy, simply out of pleasure. I long ago came to the conclusion that I could not be self-employed. No money, no entrepreneurial aspirations, no marketing skills, and, as said, no real talents—apart from bending iron. I certainly couldn't make a living from my allotment or my writing. My *Common Weeds of Malawi* was indeed a best-seller, but it earned me not a penny and nobody has approached me to make it into a film. Having in my time, and for varying intervals, been a foundry worker, a seaman, a docker, an ice-cream seller, a clerk in a cement factory and a tea planter—as well as on the dole—I have never had a strong desire to become a 'prisoner', as Denis describes it, in any of these 'employments'—so I became a teacher.

Now the 'dubious comfort' of 'state-funded employment' has its problems,

its drawbacks, it contradictions and ambiguities. But in the present context what occupational niche hasn't? Most of the people I know who are self-employed are ardent supporters of capitalism.

Yes, it's true that US and Western governments don't normally act violently against radical intellectuals, but this is symptomatic of their contemporary power. When this power is threatened, or in contexts where corporate capitalism and the state has a limited hegemony, that state has generally harassed, imprisoned and murdered radical intellectuals—as the history of anarchism attests (witness Kropotkin, Ferrier, Magon). Leaving aside intellectuals like Said and Chomsky, the state still marginalises its critics or tries to assimilate them into the system by offering them rich rewards. So it is that many of my contemporaries who in the late '60s were strident Marxists or fiery anarchists now work for UNESCO, the World Bank, or act as consultants for multinational firms, or have become media figures who pronounce on the virtues of the market.

My article was simply a ramble, a critical review of some of the recent literature on the role of intellectuals. Its only aim was to stimulate thought, given the degree to which intellectuals in their various guises now dominate the cultural scene. I didn't present my own theory of the intellectual because I don't have one, other than the general feeling—applicable to teachers as well as the high-profile intellectuals—that intellectuals, to be true to their calling, should be critical of the powers that be and of established traditions and encourage others to do likewise. As Freud and Foucault put it with regard to their own writing, one should try to destroy prejudices and stimulate critical enquiry. Intellectuals by themselves, of course, don't necessarily change anything—though nobody can deny their enormous influence. And certainly there are plenty of self-ordained radicals around, particularly within the post-modernist fraternity, who loudly proclaim their radicalism while enjoying high status careers and lucrative salaries. Fundamental social change, however, will only come about through the struggles and initiatives of ordinary working people, and intellectuals can either hinder or they can participate and support these struggles, each in their own way.

Denis Pym's suggestion that literacy (writing) simply serves the 'centralist cause', i.e., it always supports corporate capitalism and the state, is simply mistaken. If he really believes this, he should stop writing reviews and suggest the closing down of Freedom Press. Yet running through his interesting letter one detects the following dualistic schema:

Cosmopolitan	*Local*
Abstract thought	*Relational thought*
Literacy	*Experience*
Intellect	*Practical skills*
Instrumental reason	*Art, music, drama*
Reason	*Wisdom*
Artificial	*Real*
Men	*Women*

The state aligns—even equates—with the left side of this binary opposition, along with literacy, while anarchism is associated with the right side. But surely we need to go beyond these binary oppositions and embrace all aspects of human experience, abstract thought and practical skills, Aristotle's realism and Socrates' existentialism, the intellect and the imagination, thought and emotion, reason, to understand the world, and wisdom in our search for meaning, and literacy … and all that is of value in oral traditions. The 'primitivism' that seems to underpin Denis's letter is one-sided. It reminds me of John Zerzan's writings —though he is even more extreme than Denis and sees language itself as a form of repression. I'm all for communication—kinetic, verbal and in the form of writing. Literacy? We need more of it not less.

Brian Morris

Dear *Freedom*

'The Role of the Intellectual' by Brian Morris (*Freedom, 24th June and 8th July 1995*) was a most interesting and informative article. However, there are a couple of points I would like to add to this discussion. By their record, intellectuals are probably the last group on earth you should listen to for political advice. Much better to talk to the postman or your barber. Consider the great long list of apologists of tyrants and totalitarian ideologies one can draw up—Heidegger, Céline, Paul de Man and Pound the fascists, Sartre, Bernal, Joliet-Curé and Needham the Stalinists. And this is only off the top of my head.

Of all the intellectual crew, the 'committed' are probably the most dangerous because they are able to hide their dishonesty and power-lust behind a thick façade of self-righteous moralistic twaddle that does not hang so easily on the liberal apologist. The 'committed' will certainly 'expose ideology'—with the exception of their own ideology, which is the Truth and therefore sacrosanct.

Why is this so? Perhaps it has to do with the arrogance and elitism of intellectuals. They seem to suffer from the delusion that since they are brilliant in their speciality, they must be bright lights in all things—and especially politics. They are also far removed from the daily life of ordinary people and live entirely in a world of ideas. As a consequence, they are much more likely than working people to get caught up in utopian schemes and mistake their fantasies for reality.

Except for a tiny minority that have proven their worth over time, to hell with intellectuals. Give me a working class auto-didact any day!

Larry Gambone

■ UTOPIA IN THE AMAZON

Originally published in *Anarchist Studies* (1995)

War of Shadows: The Struggle for Utopia in the Peruvian Amazon Michael F. Brown and Eduardo Fernandez, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994)

This is a valuable and interesting study which combines history and anthropology. It is focused on a particular event in Peruvian history—the insurgency of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left in 1965—and a particular people, the Ashaninkas (Campa) Indians of Eastern Peru. By means of oral histories and interviews the authors explore the complex interrelationship between these people and both the Marxist guerrillas and the counter-insurgency forces of the Peruvian state. Crucial to their account is the reoccurrence, in varying contexts, on a myth that is deeply entrenched in Ashaninka culture. This relates to the legend of an outsider, who proclaims radical social change, and is identified by these people as the sun of the sun-god (Itomi Pava), who has the power to reverse the sufferings that the Ashaninka are now experiencing, and thus establish a new order of social well-being. The study therefore is about a people, a specific episode, and a myth.

The Ashaninka are an Arawak-speaking people who live in small settlements in the Central Amazon region of Peru. Living initially in scattered villages without chiefs, their social life in the past, as the authors describe it, was a 'constantly changing panorama of activities under-written by a high degree of personal liberty'. The main activities were the growing of manioc and sweet potatoes by women, and hunting and fishing by men. Mediating between the people and the spirit world were shamans (sheripiari), who entered trance states by ingesting tobacco or the hallucinogen ayahuasca.

During the 16th and 17th century this part of the Amazon was colonised by Spanish missionaries, soldiers of fortune and freebooters. This led to the establishment of a tributary state, and the establishment of a rigid class system, the Indians working the mines and farms owned by the Spanish settlers, particularly in the highlands.

Around 1743 an Indian, Juan Santos Atahualpa, proclaimed himself Inca, and sought the removal of the Spaniards from Peru, and the re-establishment of the Inca Empire, with himself as King. He proclaimed his message among the Ashaninka and neighbouring peoples—and they soon abandoned the missions and began actively to resist Spanish rule. The rebellion had by 1756 lost its momentum, and what became of Juan Santos is a mystery but legends of a returning Inkarri—the Inca King—have since then widely circulated among Amazonian people such as the Ashaninka.

The authors then go on to discuss the infamous 'Rubber Boom' that began towards the end of the 19th century—which is associated with the notorious Carlos Fermin Fitzcarrald and other rubber 'barons', and which involved debt servitude

and brutal force to coerce the Ashaninka into collecting the profitable latex. Later the 'agricultural frontier' moved steadily into the Amazon basin as highland peasants and settlers began to open up farms, coffee being the main cash crop. Soon the Ashaninka found themselves pushed aside in their own homeland, their situation becoming precarious and their poverty increasing, as they were unable to claims land rights for the areas they had long inhabited. By the 1960s two impulses, the authors suggest, which had sustained the Ashaninka throughout their long history, came to the fore—one was to resist the intrusion of the outsiders, the other was the belief that a redeeming spirit or saviour would emerge to restore their prosperity, freedom and well-being. In 1965, when the movement of the revolutionary left began their insurgency operations in East Peru—under the name Tupac Amaru—both these impulses coalesced.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Brown and Fernandez suggest, Peru had a 'phylogenetic thicket' of various Marxist groups, although outside of the universities the influence of mainstream Marxism was negligible. But in the early 1960s the writings of Ernesto Guevara de la Serna, the Argentinean physician, usually known as Che Guevara, began to enter the popular imagination of Peru. The principal theoretician of Cuban socialism, Guevara had published a book in 1960 called 'Guerilla Warfare'. In it he propounded his scheme of the revolutionary FOCO, or focal point, a way 'to jump-start the revolution', as the authors express it. This was the idea that a small, mobile revolutionary FOCO, or focal point, a way 'to jump-start the revolution', as the authors express it. This was the idea that a small, mobile revolutionary vanguard, trained in Marxist ideology and guerrilla tactics, would establish themselves in some isolated part of the countryside. There they would educate the rural masses, and initiate a socialist revolution. The revolutionary would combine the roles of teacher, warrior and saint. The connection between Guevara and Peru was close, as his first wife had been Peruvian, and he had twice visited Peru in the 1950s.

The Movimiento De Izquierda Revolucionaria (the Movement of the Revolutionary Left) was founded in Lima in 1963 by Luis de la Puente Uceda, and it was based on the principles suggested by Guevara, namely revolution by means of an armed struggle in the countryside. In 1964 the Movement launched the revolution on three fronts: near Piura in the north, in the central highlands near Huancayo, and in the south near Cuzco. The insurgency on the northern front never materialised; that in the south under de la Puente was suppressed in October 1965, de la Puente and his comrades being killed as they tried to break out of the blockade around Mesa Pelada; only the central front of the Movement was a protracted campaign, and this insurgency the book details at length.

Known as Tupac Amaru, the insurgency in Central Peru began in April 1965 under the leadership of Guillermo Lobaton Milla. Lobaton was of Afro-American, working class background, and had spent many years abroad studying literature and philosophy. He spoke several languages fluently. The insurgency campaign got under way quite quickly, with raids on haciendas and the distribution of cattle among the peasants. But these acts of revolutionary propaganda

soon led to a shooting war. Within a very short time the Marxist guerrillas were driven from the highlands, and into the jungle area inhabited by the Ashaninka. The attitude of these people to the revolutionary movement was, as the authors illustrate with extracts from interviews with participants in the campaign, diverse and ambivalent. Many Ashaninka supported the guerrillas, and even joined the revolutionary movement: others looked upon them as outsiders, and some identified Lobaton as the son of the sun god, a spiritual redeemer with a messianic message.

Heavily outnumbered, the Marxist guerrillas were hounded and harassed by the Peruvian armed forces, as their column moved from place to place through the Amazonian jungle. Fighter bombers bombarded and napalmed Indian villages, and few of the guerrillas, or the Ashaninka who may have supported them, were taken alive. Applying the 'law of flight', the army shot fleeing prisoners, and many were thrown from helicopters over the jungle, in some cases while still alive. Lobaton and his small group were finally captured and killed at the end of 1965.

The authors estimated that over $10 million were spent by the Peruvian government, and over three thousand soldiers and police were employed to subdue, they write, 'scarcely a hundred poorly armed revolutionaries' (190).

Thus, in summary, is the gist of Brown and Fernandez' illuminating account of the 1965 insurgency in Peru, told mainly through the recollections of the Ashaninka and some of the surviving revolutionaries. It is well worth a read.

By way of a footnote, it may be noted that four years later a philosophy professor at Ayacucho, Abimael Guzman Renoso formed the 'Communist Party of Peru by the Shining Path of Mariategui', in homage to the founder of Peruvian socialism. Unlike the earlier movement the Shining Path put down roots deep in the countryside, and had thus, by the 1980s, become one of the most radical and dogmatic expressions of Marxism in Latin America. Over a decade, deaths linked to Shining Path violence and to the government's equally brutal effort to suppress the insurgency, have numbered more than twenty thousand. In the 1990s the Shining Path became embroiled with the Ashaninka communities that refused to obey its dictates and directives. Thus today, the authors conclude, the Ashaninka not only have to contend with ecological degradation and poverty, but also with political violence.

■ TAGORE AND NATIONALISM

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We are witnessing today two somewhat contradictory political processes: on the one hand attention is drawn to the phenomena of globalisation, and to the apparent demise of the nation-state. On the other hand, we are seeing the resurgence of a strident nationalism in many parts of the world.

The two processes, however, are not in radical opposition, for those economic processes which seem to be undermining the nation-state—the creation of an international capitalism through the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, transnational corporations and various trade blocs such as the European Union and the North American Free Trade Agreement—are in fact, as Chomsky observes, leading to the creation of a *de facto* world government which has powers which are virtually immune from popular democratic control. The United Nations is virtually a front for a 'new imperialism', and the European Union is emerging as essentially a new supra-national federal state. 'European identity' is thus a resurgent form of nationalism, one that has become increasingly racialized with the notion of a fortress Europe.

Rudolph Rocker noted that modern nationalism found its fullest expression in Italian fascism and German national socialism, and argued for a federal union of European peoples based not on nationalism but on culture—as the first step towards the creation of a world federation on anarchist lines, one free of coercive power relations. The European Union that is now envisaged is, in contrast, statist, bureaucratic, and essentially racist. And it has always to be kept in mind that 'globalisation' is taking place under the aegis of various nation-states, for it is their coercive power that guarantees property, and the internationalisation of capital. The effects of this globalisation is there for all to see—social and economic polarisation, widespread poverty, the disintegration of communities' ethnic and imperial conflicts, political instability and the undermining of popular democratic control, and the degradation of the environment.

In the present climate Rocker's *Nationalism and Culture*, first published in 1937, is surely worth rereading, offering a survey of European culture and its decline, as capitalism and the nation-state developed to undermine human dignity and freedom. He never denied people have a sense of belonging to a community, a feeling of attachment to a particular culture or place. But for Rocker nationalism was something very different, a kind of religion, a 'new faith'. He felt that it was the state that created the nation, and that nationalism was a reactionary phenomenon, creating artificial boundaries between people. Nationalism has 'never been anything but the political religion of the modern state.'

Another much neglected figure who wrote a little book on nationalism was the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore. He was a highly creative soul, and essays, novels, plays, poems, and songs poured in an endless stream from his pen. He was a friend—and critic—of Gandhi. Tagore is always depicted as a rather serene, saintly figure, with a long white beard, the embodiment of the oriental

sage. But if you read his poems, especially those recently translated by Ketaki Dyson, you realise that Tagore was not only a man of radical aspirations, in his indictment of religious cant, violence and commercial greed, but also a rather complex, complicated and troubled individual.

In 1916, during the First World War, Tagore lectured in Japan and the United States. He was then in his fifties, having suddenly found himself famous after receiving the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913. He lectured on nationalism, and these lectures were published the following year as a small book which has recently been reissued, with an introduction by EP Thompson, whose father was a critic of the Raj and an early biographer of Tagore.

Founder of 'anti-politics'

What Tagore's book presents is a powerful, even if at times lyrical, indictment of both state power and nationalism. One could indeed make out a strong case that Tagore was a kind of religious anarchist. He had a clear conception of a social order, an organic unity, that was prior to, and independent of, the state. Society, for Tagore, had no ulterior purpose: it was an end in itself. It is, he wrote, 'a spontaneous self-expression of man as a social being. It is a natural regulation of human relationship, so that men can develop ideals of life in co-operation with one another.'

That nation, on the other hand, was a relatively modern concept that developed in Western Europe. It was the idea of a political and economic union of people, organised for purely 'mechanical' purposes—exploitation, power over others, greed, exclusiveness. Tagore, according to EP Thompson, was a founder of 'anti-politics', and presents a severe indictment of both the nation and nationalism. The political civilisation which has sprung up in Europe, Tagore writes, is overrunning the whole world like a 'prolific weed'. Based on exclusiveness, it is ever watchful to keep the aliens at bay or to exterminate them… it weaves its meshes of lies without shame, it enshrines gigantic idols of greed in its temples, taking great pride in the costly ceremonials of its worship, calling this patriotism'.

Whereas early dynastic states impinged on local communities at intervals rather like natural disasters, the tentacles of the modern nation-state, Tagore writes, penetrates deeply into the social fabric of a community. It is like a 'poisonous fluid' that undermines spontaneity, vitality and freedom; it forges 'iron chains' of organisation that controls our lives at every turn. The nation, he concludes, 'with all its paraphernalia of power and prosperity, its flags and pious hymns, its blasphemous prayers in the churches….*is the greatest evil*'.

What particularly troubled Tagore was that people everywhere seemed to readily embrace the 'fetish of nationalism', this 'all pervading mental slavery', with cheerfulness and pride—though in fact they were sacrificing both their freedom and humanity. Although Tagore saw this 'ghastly abstraction', the nation, as an essentially European phenomenon that was being embraced uncritically in India and Japan, and although he saw it as the creation of 'science and

selfishness', he nevertheless renounced neither science nor humanism. He held fast to 'true modernism'—universalism, the independence of thought, the ideal of ethical freedom, the 'banner of liberty' that he saw as inherent in the Western political tradition. He protested against injustice in the name of 'humanity', and as Thompson remarks, Tagore's courageous espousal of the values of universalism—at a time when nationalism was rampant—is something we need to rekindle in the present context.

■ AMERICAN CIVILIZATION

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C.L.R. James, *American Civilization*, edited by Anna Grimshaw and Keith Hart, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993)

A review of this book by one scholar carried the title 'A Most Remarkable Tourist'. A tourist, as normally understood, is a person who is a holiday-maker, who travels according to seasons, who looks at the sights (increasingly the 'sites'), and whose relationship with a culture or place is essentially disengaged and transient. By such criteria C.L.R. James was by no stretch of the imagination a 'tourist', and it is of interest that in the writing of this book, based on the experience of fifteen years living and working in the United States, James took as his role model that doyen of American liberalism, Alexis de Tocqueville. And de Tocqueville himself was certainly no tourist.

The book, which in essence is a cultural history of the United States, is based on an unpublished manuscript that James abandoned in 1953, when he was in the process of being deported from the United States. Edited, and with an excellent introduction by Anna Grimshaw and Keith Hart, the volume is an extremely important addition to James's published writings. James was an extraordinary figure, and one of the most important intellectuals of the twentieth century. Scholarly, radical, unpretentious, cosmopolitan in outlook—who in this era of postmodernism still claims to be, like James, an 'internationalist' and to affirm the intellectual relevance of Aristotle and Hegel?—James was, throughout most of his long life, a kind of libertarian Trotskyist. He thus made an important attempt to combine Marxism with the struggles of Black people for emancipation and for basic democratic rights. The book, as the editors suggest, forms a link between his early political writings and historiography—his classic account of the San Domingo rebellion *The Black Jacobins* was published in 1938 when he left Britain for the United States—and his highly original and semi-autobiographical study *Beyond a Boundary* published in 1963.

Although it seems to be a preliminary draft for a book—the original title was 'Notes on American Civilization'—the study has a definite structure and coherence, although it would have been helpful if the editors *had* imposed themselves on James's 'freewheeling enterprise' and given the references to the many long quotations that liberally adorn the text.

James's scholarly, thoughtful, readable text, exploratory in style, has the nature of a guided tour—which is engaged, intellectual and critical not touristic—as James takes us through the highways and byways of American cultural history. Essentially James explores the contradiction and conflict between the ideals and aspirations of the American democratic tradition—hence his affirmation that he is following the spirit and aims of de Tocqueville—and the social and economic realities of present-day America. Between the ideal and the reality there is, for James, an abyss, and he is essentially concerned with exploring the 'colossal failure' of American civilization.

James takes us through the history of this culture in three stages. In the first stage, from 1776 to 1876, James outlines the basic parameters of American political culture, the 'spirit' which sought to express as a social reality the ideals of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. He quotes liberally from Burke and de Tocqueville to illustrate this 'spirit', the bourgeois individualism that emphasized 'freedom, initiative, adventure, self-expression, in pursuit of trade and industry' (p.44). It was a 'spirit' that was able to fully express itself in the United States (where there was no feudal system to revolt against), and James suggests that by around 1850 the United States was in actuality a land of equality and heroic individualism. He does not, however, see the American spirit as being the product of the 'frontier', as explored in Turner's well-known thesis. In fact, at no place in the text does James mention the Native American people. What he suggests, instead, is that the American spirit had its essential origins in the seafaring trade of New England.

He then goes on to discuss the work of a group of intellectuals who stem from the social matrix of New England—Walt Whitman, Herman Melville and the abolitionists William Garrison and Wendell Phillips. While Whitman is applauded for his celebration of the individual and for the democratic vision that is expressed in his poetry, James points out that Whitman's sense of rebellion, though creative, was highly individualistic, and that he had no sense of revolution as a social movement. Melville, on the other hand, always had a sense of the individual as a social being, and his book *Moby Dick*, which James perceptively examines, is considered by James to be one of the great novels of the nineteenth century. What the book essentially describes, according to James, is an industry—the whaling industry—the ship, the *Pequod*, being in essence a factory. The novel is not simply an adventure story but portrays an enterprise in which men are seeking to conquer nature. The white whale represents nature in its most elemental, powerful, even malevolent form, while the obsessive, tormented Captain Ahab symbolizes the capitalist, the strident individualist attempting to control and overcome nature. For James, Melville's *Moby Dick* is a severe indictment of modern capitalism, heroic individualism taken to its extreme… Ahab find his ultimate expression in the totalitarian dictator.

James's discussion of the Abolitionists is of a very different tenor: here he emphasizes the fact that this was specifically an American phenomenon, and was a radical mass movement that sought to expose the shallowness of the 'Constitution' and the corruption of American politics. The Abolitionist movement, as James describes it, was radical, pacifist, internationalist, and fought for both the emancipation of slaves and the equality of women—though unconnected with the labour movement. Though intrinsically American, it implied a revolutionary concept of democracy.

The second phase of American cultural history, 1876-1919, James passes over rather hurriedly, in but six pages. He notes, briefly, only the importance of the westward expansion, and the consolidation of industrial capitalism—quoting from Turner. Surprisingly then, James has little to say on this most crucial period of American history—either on the rise of industrial capitalism, on

American labour struggles so famously portrayed by Samuel Yellen and by Philip Foner, or on the literature of the period.

He thus comes to examine the third and final stage of American civilization, 1920-50, and his account of this modern period, based on his own personal experiences in the United States, takes up the bulk of the book. Three themes are explored. The first is the inherent contradiction in American industrial civilization between the ideals which emphasize the freedom of the individual and the intrinsic desire that workers express to manage and control their own work station, and the realities of industrial production. James speaks of a 'duality' of existence, and emphasizes the fact that workers are not treated as humans, with creative potential, but merely as 'cogs in a great machine'. Disciplined, controlled, standardized, workers are treated as 'automatons' within the Fordist system, which constitutes, he writes, the essence of American industry. He quotes from the classical studies of Elton Mayo and Peter Drucker in emphasizing the affinities between Fordism and the prison system, and the totalitarian and elitist implications of the mechanization of production. James quotes extensively from management theorists themselves to indicate a recognition that the factory system is a denial of human individuality and of the freedom of association.

James thus concludes that in America an economy and a society has developed in which the earlier ideals of liberty and individuality have in essence been lost. There is thus an intrinsic conflict between American ideals and reality, and the general frustration and bitterness that has in consequence arisen find their clearest ideological expression, James contends, where they are least likely to be looked for—in the popular arts. This is the second theme that James explores. What he suggests is that the popular arts, reflected in comic strips, in gangster movies, in the novels of Frank Yerby, in the figure of Charlie Chaplin (especially as in the film *City Lights*), in radio, are not to be conceived simply as a sop for a frustrated population, but rather they give satisfaction to the masses precisely because they express aesthetically the realities of modern America, of

> …the individual seeking individuality in a mechanized, socialized society, where his life is ordered and restricted at every turn, where there is no certainty of employment, far less of being able to rise by energy or ability or going West as in the old days (p. 127).

As a third theme, and in order to examine more closely the realities of American culture, James examines three elements of American life—Negroes, women and intellectuals. He has something perceptive to say on all three constituents, and in many respects he anticipates in his reflections the civil rights and the feminist movements that were to emerge in the following decade. He stresses the realities of what was called the 'Negro question'—the racism which James personally experienced—arguing that Black Americans were not seeking any special privileges, constitution or statehood—Black Muslims were then still to emerge as a political force—but simply basic human rights, to freedom and equality.

His discussion of intellectuals focuses on American representatives of three intellectual currents—existentialism, Catholic humanism and Marxism (Stalinism)—and he offers some interesting and critical reflections of all three traditions.

Written, as James explicitly acknowledges, in the spirit of de Tocqueville, this important volume offers some interesting, indeed arresting, reflections on American culture, and affirms James—that unassuming democratic activist, as Paul Buhle calls him—as one of the most creative Marxists of the present century.

■ TOM PAINE—THE MAN OF REASON

Originally published in *Freedom* (1996)

Tom Paine was one of the greatest political thinkers Britain has produced. He was one of the most important radical pamphleteers writing at the end of the 18th century, and his pamphlets "Common Sense" and "Rights of Man" had a profound and lasting influence. He was a propagandist for, and actively involved in, revolution in three countries—the United States, Britain and France. Because of his radical views he became the "greatest exile" ever to leave these shores, and even today his name evokes revulsion in conservative circles. His biographer David Powell records that in 1982, in response to a television programme on Paine, the Daily Telegraph still sought to deride and belittle him—described Paine as "the kind of philosopher whose natural forum was the pub". Many have seen Paine as one of the founders of anarchism. Gwyn Williams, for example, remarked that the book *Rights of Man* was "practically anarchist". As a result of this, as Nicholas Walter has written, Paine has generally been ignored by historians of political thought. De Tocqueville and Herzen are lauded by liberal scholars, but Paine is hardly given a mention in most academic texts. Witness Robert Dahl's recent, much acclaimed book on democracy. Apart from a small group of enthusiasts who have kept his memory green, Paine has been, as Powell poignantly puts it, "little more than a disturbing footnote to English history". Peter Marshall, in his lucid history of anarchism, gives Paine a more considered attention, describing Paine as a radical liberal who had developed liberal theory to "the threshold of anarchism".

This year marks the two hundredth anniversary of the publication of Paine's *The Age of Reason*. This remarkable book was written and published in two parts. The first part Paine gave to a friend shortly before he was arrested by Robespierre and his Jacobin associates in December 1793. Paine spent almost a year in prison, suffering from fever and ulcers, and not knowing from day to day whether it would be his last. Paine had no doubt that Robespierre wanted his execution, as Paine had pleaded for the life of Louis XVI. Not that Paine had much sympathy for such "crowned ruffians". But though stridently anti-monarchist, Paine was, given his Quaker origins, equally opposed to the barbarity of the death penalty. Part one of *The Age of Reason* was published in England in 1794, while he was still in prison. The second part he wrote while recuperating from his prison ordeal, which almost cost him his life.

This book, a "passionate testament to deism" as Powell rightly describes it, is one of the most important and influential treatises on religion ever published. Paine's radicalism and his revolutionary views hardly made him popular with the British establishment. He was charged with sedition and Pitt had tried to suppress the publication of the *Rights of Man*—by bribing the publisher. But the publication of *The Age of Reason* caused an even greater furore, and Paine had to face a barrage of insult and vituperation, both in Britain and in the United States. He was described as a "lying, drunken, brutal infidel" and a

"demi-human archbeast". The attacks on him were both theological and personal, and Paine was seen by many of his contemporaries as evil personified. In 1797 Thomas Williams was brought before an English court and charged with publishing blasphemy—*The Age of Reason*—and convicted; he was imprisoned for a year. Two decades later, as Nicolas Walter records in his short history of blasphemy, Richard Carlile was also prosecuted for publishing Paine's writings on religion—and for blasphemy was imprisoned for several years. Even a century later Theodore Roosevelt, the ardent imperialist who became an American president, was still describing Paine as that "filthy little atheist". As A.J. Ayer remarked, Roosevelt was wrong on all counts, particularly that of Paine being an atheist. For the book offers a passionate advocacy of deism.

The book does not present an original thesis, for a rationalist approach to religion was suggested by many Enlightenment thinkers—Franklin, Voltaire, Jefferson and Spinoza, although Spinoza's mystical rationalism was more pantheist that deist. Deism even has echoes in the Quran where it is written that the heavens and earth, the alternation of night and day, the rain that nourishes the earth, and all the creatures of the earth are but "signs" to those who use their reason (13; 2-5, 45; 3-6). But Paine's motivation for writing the text was not philosophical, but more personal: to publish his own thoughts upon religion.

In an early essay the founder of the Western Buddhist Order, Sangharakshita (Dennis Lingwood) suggested that there were fundamentally two contrasting kinds of religion. The distinction revolved around the problem as to whether religion is a "revelation of truth TO man, or a discover of truth BY man". We have thus *religion—as—revelation*, reflected in the Judaeo-Christian tradition and Islam, which holds that salvation or human emancipation, it ultimately dependent on the other, on God or an authoritative source. Such a religion places a fundamental emphasis on faith in God, faith in a prophet and faith in the holy scriptures, faith in the church or priest. Hideous fanaticism and ferocious persecution inevitably arise, according to Sangharakshita, from this kind of religion.

Religion—as—discovery, on the other hand, holds essentially that religion is a manifestation of the human spirit, and that humans are able to discover the way to truth by themselves, by means of their own unaided efforts. The religious founder, as in Buddhism and Taoism, simply describes or suggests the way. "They demand not blind faith but clear-sighted understanding, they appeal not to some infallible authority but to reason and experience" (1987; 150).

This kind of distinction Tom Paine made two hundred years ago, drawing a contrast between the Christian system of faith—this impious thing called "revealed religion"—and deism, the "true theology" that is based on reason and discovery.

Paine's *The Age of Reason* is one long indictment of Christianity, and of all religions of revelation. Long before Marx, he was suggesting that religious institutions were nothing other than human inventions, "set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit" (p. 400). Although Paine acknowledged the moral character of Jesus and his historicity, both parts of *The*

Age of Reason present a radical critique of the Bible as the revealed word of God. In fact, he felt that the Christian Church had set up a system of religion—one of pomp and revenue—that was in direct contradiction to the character of the person whose name it bears. The anarchist Tolstoy was to argue the same thesis a century later.

The Bible itself Paine described a "a history of wickedness that has served to corrupt and brutalize mankind" (p. 411). He detailed: the contradictions in the Biblical accounts of various events like the resurrection, the catalogue of obscenities, cruelties and barbarities executed in the name of god by various Hebrew prophets and rulers, and the similarities to be found between many Christian theories and ancient mythology. Towards the prophet Moses, Paine was particularly hostile. Moses, Paine argued, was one of the most detestable villains in history, committing unexampled atrocities in ordering the slaughter of young boys and mothers, and debauchery with the young women of Midian—all at God's command (Numbers 31; 2-18.) A.J. Ayer has noted that there might be a streak of anti-Semitism in Paine's denunciation of the ancient Jewish prophets as a lot of "ruffians and cutthroats", but it is well to remember that the liberal ideas of the Enlightenment tended to be much more tolerant towards the Jews than did the Catholic religion, and that the main thrust of Paine's critique was aimed at Christianity as a religion of revelation. As he wrote:

"The most detestable wickedness, the most horrid cruelties, and the greatest miseries that have afflicted the human race have had their origin in this thing called revelation or revealed religion" (Foner p. 596). And he goes on:

"Of all the systems of religion that ever were invented, there is none more derogatory to the Almighty, more unedifying to man, more repugnant to reason, and more contradictory in itself, that this thing called Christianity…as an engine of power, it serves the purposes of despotism" (Foner p. 600).

Paine, of course, totally refuted the idea that God communicated anything to humans through revelation—whether in the form of words or visions. He thus rejected not only the many "wild and whimsical systems of faith", but was highly sceptical of all miracles, mysteries and prophecies. There is no need for any form of revelation, he argued, for god reveals "himself" in the creation, and a sense of morality exists in every person's conscience.

Paine thus came to identify religion, or true theology, with the mechanistic philosophy of the Enlightenment—and this religion he called pantheism or deism. God is thus revealed in the created world. As he put it: "the creation is the only true and real word of God", and the "gift of reason" is the choicest of God's gifts to humans. Thus only by the exercise of reason can humans, according to Paine, discover God; and the system of principles that underlies "his" creation can only be discovered—through science. Thus Paine's deism can be summed up in the words: "That which is now called natural philosophy, embracing the whole circle of science…is the study of the works of God and the power and wisdom of God in his works and is the true theology" (p. 424).

The only religion that approached that of the deist—whose religion consists

in contemplating the power and benign nature of the deity in the creation—Paine thought was that professed by the Quakers—Paine himself coming from a Quaker background. But had the Quakers been consulted on the creation, he cheekily reflected, what a silent and drab coloured world it would have been—not a flower would have blossomed, nor any bird sing!

Although, like both Spinoza and Kant, Paine had a mechanistic conception of the world—he described God as the "great mechanic of the creation"—he nevertheless stressed a closeness and a reverential attitude towards the natural world. The "Bible of creation", he wrote, is a text "for devotion as for philosophy—for gratitude as for human improvement". Unlike many Enlightenment thinkers, Paine did not stress a radical opposition between humans and nature, and it is rather ironic that it was a religious thinker like Pascal who advocated an unreasoning faith in God, who preached a profound pessimism about the human condition, and who found the world bleak and empty—"bereft of divinity" as Karen Armstrong puts it.

It is important to realize therefore that for Paine religion and science were not incompatible: what was incompatible was the Christian system of faith and reason. Mystery, he felt, was antagonistic to truth, miracles befuddle the senses, and prophecy and revelation are fraudulent—only through reason and experience could humans discover God and understand the world. He bewailed the fact that there was precious little in the Bible about the creation: it was a text he thought that appealed to the isolated monk in his gloomy cell, not the person breathing the open air of creation. My own mind, he wrote, is my church, and every person, in essence, his own teacher.

But faith and intolerance, as Paine was aware, were not confined to religion, and he reflected on the fact that the Jacobin revolutionaries had imbibed the "intolerant spirit" of the Inquisition, simply replacing the stake with the guillotine. A recent manifestation of this Jacobin attitude, it is worth noting, is the Shining Path guerrilla movement in Peru. This movement has made a religion of Marxism, and sees itself as the sole repository of truth—as revealed by Marx, Lenin and Mao. As the self-conceived "fourth sword" of Marxism, this fundamentalist sectarian group, proclaiming to represent the interests of the people, has sought, like Robespierre, to use revolutionary violence to create a new social order.

Paine, the man of reason, eschewed such violence, and had a very different vision of liberty.

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■ RUDOLF BAHRO: GREEN VISIONARY OR ECO-FASCIST?

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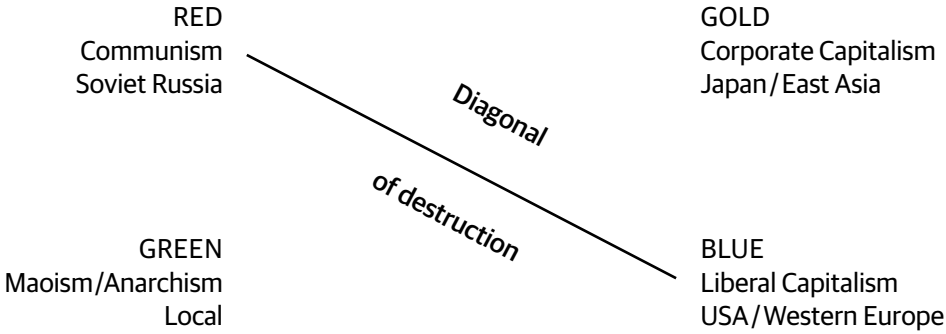
In 1952, aged seventeen, Rudolf Bahro joined the East German Communist Party. Quickly becoming a leading party intellectual, he was angered and disturbed by the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. He thus came to write his famous critique of Soviet communism: *The Alternative in Eastern Europe*. It was published in 1977 in West Germany. Bahro was soon arrested for "publishing state secrets" and sentenced to eight years in prison. However, in October 1979, under a general amnesty, he was released—and he moved to West Germany. He was warmly welcomed into the Die Grunen, the West Germany Green Party, then in the process of formation. He quickly became the leader of the "fundamentalist" wing of the party (the"fundis"). At that period he was described as "a charming combination of insight, originality, and innocence, seeming rather like a middle aged, bespectacled school-boy, with soft spoken, almost impish ways about him" (Spretnak and Capra 1985; 25). He was also dubbed a "visionary green theorist". But Bahro quickly became estranged from the Green Party, and in June 1985 he resigned from the party on the grounds that it had become too closely identified with the industrial system, and its political administration. Bahro sought a more gentle and non-violent way.

Yet from his earliest writings one detects the direction in which his politics were moving; not towards anarchism but towards new-age spiritualism. What we need, he wrote, is a renewal of the "gnostic tradition", for he always felt himself drawn towards such thinkers as Joachim di Fiore, Meister Eckhart and Pascal. Their mystical vision, he wrote, are focussed towards "freedom of the spirit". Social emancipation, for Bahro, thus implies mysticism and meditation. To this end he spent a month sitting at the feet of the now discredited guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, declaring in 1983, that the Rajneeshpuram in Oregon was the "most important place on earth".

In the bookshops now is an abridged version of his *Logic de Rettung* (the logic of salvation) first published in 1987. It is titled *Avoiding Social and Ecological Disaster* (Bath, Gateway Books, 1994), and it makes interesting and rather disturbing reading. It presents a gnostic, apocalyptic vision, for Bahro is a self-declared religious fundamentalist. "God alone is", he tells us, "and outside God is nothing" (p. 16). A New Social Order is then proclaimed, to be initiated by the ecological/peace movement—the "ecopax formation" he calls it. But this new order has nothing to do with economics per se, with the creation of an ecological society, but rather involves a spiritual renaissance. An apocalypse is envisaged, brought about by a world-wide "invisible church", a "communion of saints" dedicated to establishing the "kingdom of God" on earth. This is done through mysticism, meditation and the "logic of salvation". Meditation, tantric rituals, and Jungian therapy—to promote psychic "individuation"—essentially forms the "axis" of the salvation movement. The most important thing, he writes, is to locate the places at which "a reconstruction of God can take place". We need

to free ourselves from the "old culture" by an "appeal to the godhead" (p. 304).

In true gnostic fashion Bahro writes of two forces in the world, one of evil, the other for good, the logic of exterminism and the logic of salvation. Exterminism is rooted in human nature: salvation implies a spiritual transformation through an appeal to the godhead. Exterminism, a term he adopts from E.P. Thompson, is taken to mean the last stage of human civilization, the era of the megamachine. The megamachine refers not simply to modern technology, but to the whole industrial system. The megamachine, as a "diagonal of destruction" includes both soviet communism and liberal capitalism, for both embrace the factory system and modern industry, following the simplistic analysis of Johan Galtung; Japanese-style capitalism is left out of his account.



The "logic of exterminism" is linked by Bahro in a causal chain to human nature, and is given a historical sequence as follows: human nature—patriarchy—European cosmology—capitalism—the megamachine—exterminism… the last stage of civilization.

Human nature for Bahro, indeed life itself, is inherently exploitative and parasitic, and involves the drive for mastery and self-assertion. We are at heart, he tells us, "anxiety ridden", and as we are such weak animals, human consciousness (and culture) is seen by Bahro as a "compensatory power instrument" (p. 137), entailing the subjugation of the earth and animals. Ken Wilber is Bahro's guide in such matters. The human condition is thus viewed in very Hobbesian fashion, and even self-identity (personality) and human thought is taken to be synonymous with aggression, murder, oppression and exploitation. It is the old doctrine of original sin, wrapped up in modern psychologistic jargon. Such a "condition", of course, can only be overcome by spiritual salvation and recourse to the deity.

Inevitably, such human proclivities for power, egoism and aggression give rise to patriarchy, and the masculine logic that steers us all towards death. Following the simplistic analysis of Walter Schubart, women are identified with life, while men through their inherent "constitution" do not think about life at

all, but, driven by solitude and egoism, only want to murder and conquer nature. The ego is identified with the masculine gender, with logos (reason), and this, in turn, is identified with the bourgeois individual. Thus patriarchy gives rise to capitalism. Nowhere in this analysis does Bahro engage himself with anthropological or historical data, simply assuming a universal patriarchy and a universal state of aggression (see Howell and Willis 1989, and Leacock 1981 for a different perspective on these issues).

Prior to the rise of capitalism, however, comes European cosmology. This is the culture of the "white man"—*Homo occidentalis*—initiated by the Greeks, and exemplified by the Germanic tribes whose psychological disposition, he tells us, is that of the nomad—militant, aggressive, conquering. The Greeks, the Romans, the Germanic people all had "cosmology" that involved the mastery of nature and competitive individualism—and this benefited capitalism.

Capitalism, the market economy, is not for Bahro an order of society, but a "power principle" which dominates varying forms of society, and has done so ever since the invention of money. Capitalism, is therefore, not seen as a modern phenomenon, and it should not be defined simply in terms of the appropriation of surplus labour. In essence, for Bahro, capitalism is a form of power, involving production for the market and the generation of profits through capital. They dynamics of capitalism itself then give rise to the "megamachine" - the industrial system, the "pentagon of power". With its self-destructive logic of exterminism. His critique of contemporary industrialism is largely derived from Lewis Mumford.

But his response to the contemporary ecological crisis and to the "megamachine" is very different from that of Mumford. It entails not social reconstruction but the logic of salvation—mysticism and meditation. The path to salvation involves the individual in a spiritual transformation. Bahro following the rather simplistic and etiolated account of human history as the unfolding—in stages—of human consciousness (archaic, magical, mythical, mental, and the now emerging "integral" form of consciousness) as presented by the Swiss mystic Jean Gebser.

It is only when we examine the politics which Bahro advocates to accompany the individual meditation—the "path of intensive self-knowledge" (p. 160) —that we come to realise that his politics are fundamentally authoritarian, and a far cry from the Green corner of anarchism. Conflating power as creative potential and agency with the coercive power of authority, he tells us that any criticism of authority—the state- is an "adolescent posture" (p. 344). Advocating new age spiritualism Bahro is also opposed to "half-baked atheism" and in responding to the song of early revolutionaries;

No higher being will save us
No god, no Caesar, no tribune
To redeem ourselves from misery
Is something which only we can do

Bahro writes:

> In view of the ecological crisis we need to take back into ourselves all these symbolic forces. We need to internalize the sovereignty which confronts us in these symbolic figures. Then the symbols themselves—god, Caesar, tribune, master—can be helpful personal forces (p. 70).

But he not only asks us to accept and internalize coercive power, Bahro pleads also of the need to "redeem" Hitler (248). So what exactly does Bahro advocate? A spiritual-fundamentalist order founded on state power, a "world government" that is essentially theocratic, with a monarch or president, and an "ecological council". Emerging from the "invisible church", this spiritual elect, we're told, will make "the voice of divinity audible" (p. 342). People should withdraw from the market economy, Bahro suggests, and build up a "local private economy" centred on satisfying basic needs. This will end the dominance of the economy over society. In its place would be the restoration of "aristocratic principle", a "planned economy", and the establishment of a theocratic government under the "spiritual authority" of the "invisible church". The totalitarian implications of such a "salvation government" which is to implement the "voice of divinity" is too ghastly to behold. At least the Papacy and the theocratic state of the Ayatollah are visible and can be challenged.

Bahro's spiritual ecology, however, makes sense if it is situated in a long tradition of German eco-fascism. This tradition is admirably outlined and critiqued in a recent booklet by Biehl and Staudenmaier (1995). Both these writers describe the attempt, by fascist ideologists and neo-fascist political groups, to harness ecology in the service of social reaction and racial nationalism, and note that this has deep roots in Germany history. They explore the fact that within the Nazi Party there was an influential "green wing" whose environmentalism entailed a "volatile admixture of primeval Teutonic nature-mysticism, pseudo-scientific ecology, irrationalist anti-humanism, and a mythology of racial salvation through a return to land "(Staudenmaier 1995; p. 14). Its prominent themes were an organicist holism, a denigration of humanity and an agrarian romanticism. The green wing of the Nazi Party included such figures as Walther Darre, Rudolf Hess and Heinrich Himmler—all central figures in the party—as well as the philosopher Martin Heidegger.

Now although Bahro seems to distance himself from the "Browns"—the national socialists—he does seem to see fascism and the "Greens" as the two poles of the "one movement", and seems to applaud the fascist critique of Enlightenment reason, and their hostility to science, democracy, urban-life and socialism. In her important critique of Bahro's spiritual ecology, Jane Biehl highlights the fact that with Bahro the ecological crisis can only be resolved through authoritarian means, that he continually affirms the Nazi Volkisch ethos, that he embraces authoritarian theological concepts with his notion of "salvation government", as well as pleading for a "Green Adolf"—an eco-spiritualist fuhrer

(leader). All this suggests a close affinity between Bahro's politics and the mystical nationalism of the neo-fascist groups in Germany. The "salvation" of nature and humanity, for Rudolf Bahro, thus entails, Biehl concludes, the virtual embrace of eco-fascism.

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■ BEWARE OF GURUS

Originally published in *Freedom* (1997)

I have never been very fond of gurus, whether of the religious or academic variety. A couple of decades ago one of my close friends—who was intelligent, perceptive and of the radical left—became completely besotted with Bhagwan Rajneesh. She urged me to let go of my egoic attachments and to seek enlightenment, to surrender myself to the guru. Alas, I never did. For myself, I was completely baffled as to why such a person could come to completely abandon her own critical faculties. At the present time, however, gurus –or guru yoga—seem all the rage. In bookshops new age literature abounds, and books by spiritual gurus Gurdjieff, Blavatsky, Steiner, Aleister Crowley, Rajneesh, Chogyam Trungpa—seem to be selling like hotcakes. Even in academia guru worship is now actively encouraged. Thus the nihilistic post-modernism of such figures as Heidegger, Derrida, Deleuze and Baudrillard is now fervently embraced by scores of admiring acolytes, and their obscurantist writings are treated as if they were sacred texts. Murray Bookchin and John Zerzan, whatever their other differences, are united in their trenchant criticisms of these philosophical gurus.[1]

But there are two very readable books now available that give a very different account of religious gurus from that normally encountered in the new age literature. The first is by Jeffrey Masson, a renegade psychotherapist. It is called *My Father's Guru*, and is a fascinating autobiographical account of Masson's childhood and adolescence.[2] The book carries the significant subtitle *a journey through spirituality and disillusion*. His father's guru was Paul Brunton, who was the author of many successful books on Indian mysticism such as *The Secret Path* (1935) and *The Quest for the Overself* (1938). Brunton lived as a member of Masson's family for long periods and the book is a sensitive and illuminating account of Masson's relationship with this guru—and his growing disillusionment with this friend of the family, for he slowly came to recognise that Brunton was a phoney and an intellectual charlatan. But, Masson writes, Brunton "did not have the usual faults of overwhelming arrogance, sexual predation, murderous activities, ruthless greed and insatiable appetite for luxury so often found among gurus" (page xv). It is these more unsavoury aspects of the guru phenomena that is interestingly explored in Anthony Storr's latest book *Feet of Clay*.[3]

Storr is a psychiatrist by profession, but the book, like Storr's other writings, is written with a compassion and a cultural sensitivity that one does not normally associate with psychiatry. And it is also written in a style that is lucid and engaging. But, though compassionate in tone, the contents of Storr's book constitutes a sever indictment of the whole guru scene. Storr explores the biographies of a number of well-known gurus—the Reverend Jim Jones, David Koresh, Gurdjieff, Bhagwan Rajneesh, Steiner, Jung, Freud, Brunton, Mother Meera, as well as the founder of the Jesuit order Ignatius Loyala. He thus comes to suggest that gurus have the following characteristics: they have the hubris to claim special spiritual gifts, and surround themselves in mystery with respect to the

acquisition of the esoteric knowledge, they have often undergone a mid-life crisis, from which they have emerged with an unshakeable belief in their own charismatic (divine) powers; they tend to be elitist and anti-democratic, and they seldom have close friends, the relationship between the guru and his disciples or followers being one of dominance and authority not of friendship (the majority of gurus seem to be men who surround themselves with a coterie of adoring female disciples); although not all gurus have 'feet of clay', many gurus, given divine sanction, exploit their disciples emotionally, financially and sexually. The sexual abuse evident in many religious movements has been perceptively explored by Elizabeth Puttick, who describes it as the "shadow side" of the master-disciple relationship.[4] The sexual behaviour and proclivities of Gurdjieff, Rajneesh, Aleister Crowley and Chogyam Trungpa (the four gurus discussed by Feuerstein as purveyors of "crazy wisdom"[5]) are well known. Many have considered their behaviour as a form of sexual abuse, the unscrupulous exercise of charismatic power. Interestingly Puttick, herself a former disciple of Rajneesh, suggests that although there were, in the early years, sexual relationships between Oslo (on his return to India he gave up being a god) and his female disciples, they were not regarded as exploitative or abusive. He was seen as celibate, or as having "transcended sex" (pp. 63-64). Storr gives a very different portrait of the man who claimed to have sex with more women than any man in history (p. 56). Finally Storr makes the point that gurus often end up living in luxury, and Rajneesh himself owned 93 Rolls Royces and was an ardent supporter of capitalism.

The essential message, then, that one gets from the books of Masson and Storr is quite explicit: BEWARE OF GURUS for they are often dangerous charlatans. Storr, in fact, as a preface to this book, has an extract from the writings of Euripedes. It could usefully conclude this review:

> The wisest men follow their own direction
> And listen to no prophet guiding them
> None but the fools believe in oracles
> Forsaking their own judgement.

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1 John Zerzan, *Future Primitive and other essays* (Autonomedia, 1994) pages 101-134; and Murray Bookchin *Re-Enchanting Humanity* (London: Cassell, 1995) pages 172-204

2 Jeffrey Masson, *My Father's Guru: A Journey Through Spirituality and Disillusion* (London: Harper Collins, 1993).

3 Anthony Storr, *Feet of Clay: A Study of Gurus* (London: Harper Collins, 1997)

4 Elizabeth Puttick, *Women in New Religions* (New York: St Martins Press, 1997) page 50

5 Georg Feuerstein, *Holy Madness* (London: Arkana, 1992)

■ PROUDHON AND ANARCHISM

Originally published in *Freedom* (1998)

Proudhon and Anarchism: Proudhon's Libertarian Thought and the Anarchist Movement
Larry Gambone (Vancouver: Red Lion Press, 1996)

The pages of *Freedom* are regularly enlivened by the letters of Larry Gambone. His short, generous epistles are always lucid, engaging and provocative for he seems, as Denis Pym writes, to be a "bloke with plenty of ideas and passion". His letters, like the writings of Colin Ward, are refreshing—so different from the intellectual musings of the post-modern and ontological anarchists who tell us, in pretentious language, that the 'map is not the territory' as if anyone, apart from pseudo-intellectuals, had ever confused the two. Gambone is much more down to earth and is critical of many current trends within the anarchist movement:

- The utopian and primitivism of those who deem the only true anarchist to be pristine foragers, a way of life which, alas, is no longer a viable option;

- The elitism of guilt-ridden intellectuals who advocate an apolitical stance, or an aesthetic rebellion that has little connection with the lives of ordinary people; and,

- The nihilists who assume that capitalism and state powers are so all-pervasive and all-powerful that they cannot be challenged by organised protest, and that the only alternative is to create 'autonomous' zones and chant mantras.

The way many people write you would think that 'true' anarchist thought never existed until they came upon the scene, having immersed themselves in the literature of theosophy, surrealism, aesthetic theory, anthropology and post-modern philosophy.

Gambone has a more positive vision, and in his letters has stressed that anarchism is not a 'thing' that is possessed by some initiated intellectual elite, but a process involving an attempt by humble mortals to maximise voluntary relationships; that anarchism is not something that disappeared after the 'fall' of humanity (the advent of agriculture), or is only to be discovered in some autonomous zone by developing higher states of consciousness or by aiming to 'quintessentialise' an aesthetic through alchemy, Sufism, neo-pagan rituals, or joining the church of the 'Moorish Orthodox' (as Hakim Bey seems to advise us), but rather is a permanent 'programme' that is to be found wherever social life exhibits local autonomy, mutualism, direct democracy, human solidarity and decentralised power.

In his recent pamphlet on Proudhon's libertarian thought and the anarchist

movement, Larry Gambone draws out many of these ideas through an examination of Proudhon's political philosophy. Gambone emphasizes the more positive aspects of Proudhon's anarchism, and what we can learn from him, and certainly in attempting to confront the central problems of government and property Proudhon has more to teach us that the 'American Samizdat network' with its esoteric reflections on surrealism and Rene Guenon (a reactionary theosophist). There are of course, problems with the 'sage of Besançon'—his lamentable chauvinism, anti-Semitism and strident patriotism (which Peter Marshall cogently explored in his history of anarchism)—but Gambone clearly emphasizes what he thinks is important about Proudhon, and on contemporary relevance. And these are the following:

- That anarchism should be based upon a potential within actual existing society rather than being a utopian doctrine or ideology imposed by alienated intellectuals;

- That social transformation thus entails a peaceful revolution involving the development and expansion of relationships and institutions that engender mutualism, self-government, federation and human liberty;

- That economic life should combine both the ownership of small-scale property and co-operative associations which together form an 'agro-industrial federation';

- That national sentiments and identity are not to be deprecated, and that a distinction has to be made between the nation and the state, which are not conterminous;

- That all forms of absolutism are dangerous, and that we need to retain a realistic perspective and distinguish between concrete realities and the abstract products of the human mind.

Gambone concludes by reflecting on the fact that towards the end of the nineteenth century there was a shift in the membership of the anarchist movement away from self-educated artisans and peasants, like Proudhon, to bourgeois intellectuals and in many instances this led anarchism away from the concrete and the practical to the abstract and the utopian. Gambone writes: "It is the nature of upper class radicals, so distant from the realities of working class life, to look at the world through abstractions and self-created ideologies. This is also the very group which tends to glorify and romanticise violence".

This might as well apply to many contemporary anarchists—although the romanticised violence they express is largely of a cerebral nature, like the 'crooners of the apocalypse' they profess to despise. Gambone's little tract is well worth a read.

■ A NOTE ON THE ANARCHISTS OF ISLAM

Originally published in *Freedom* (1998)

Politics and religion are intrinsically connected in Islam, and it is worth beginning this note by quoting the words of Muhammad Al-'Alawi (1880-1964), a Moroccan Sufi who played an important role in the Moroccan nationalist movement. When told by a French colonial officer to avoid political issues in his lectures on Islam he is reported to have said: "Anyone who claims to give lectures on the religion of Islam without discussing politics is either a liar, a hypocrite, or an ignoramus. For Islam demands the liberation of the human being and calls for both justice and freedom and the quest for knowledge." (Munson, p. 80)

Liberty, justice, and the pursuit of knowledge, tolerance and the freedom of thought are not the sort of things that many people associated with Islam, but Al- 'Alawi is a classic example of a Sufi or religious scholar who embodies the notion of the 'righteous man of God' who dares to defy the unjust ruler. For throughout his long life Al-'Alawi was not only a thorn in the flesh of the French colonial administration, but at the end of his days dared to challenge the oppressive government of King Hassan. Although religious scholars (*ulama*) throughout the long history of Islam have tended to support or remain passive in relation to the various political dynasties or sultans, there is an important tradition of 'rebel Islam', as the sociologist Fatima Mernissi describes it. This tradition not only affirms the right of every Muslim to revolt against an unjust or oppressive political regime, but it is also suggestive that the Islamic community (*umma*) has no need of a ruler, or any coercive authority. The dominant political tradition, of course, is that expressed by Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) who, like Thomas Hobbes, affirmed the necessity of political rule, quoting the Quranic verse "Obey Allah [God], and obey the messenger of God and the people in authority among you" (4:59).

Yet, as Mernissi writes, the world has never seen a power as fragile as that of the Islamic ruler (*caliph, sultan, imam*), for he is owed obedience only to the degree that he follows the divine law (*shari'a*) and is just (*'adil*) and promotes the happiness and well-being of all members of the community. If he does not fulfil these conditions then insurrection or revolt is justified. This tradition of 'rebel Islam' Mernissi describes as a sort of spontaneous democracy, or 'people's power', that reacts against injustices by killing the caliph or political ruler "without putting much thought into how to bring about basic changes" (p. 26)—Mernissi herself being an advocate of an Islamic democratic state. These rebels thus have affinities with Russian populists and such anarchists as Johann Most who felt, at the end of the nineteenth century, that the assassination of presidents and monarchs was justified. In the first decades after the death of the prophet, these rebels, the Kharijites, raised the question: whether you must obey the caliph if he does not rule justly, and protect your basic human rights. Do you always have to obey the *caliph* (rule) or can you trust your own intellectual judgement? The Kharijites came to the conclusion that you need not obey an

oppressive ruler, and that you can 'go out', (*kharaja*) from obedience. 'To go out', Kharijites, is thus the title they gave themselves, and their motto was '*La hikma illa lillah*' ('power belongs only to God'). Political assassination became therefore an intrinsic aspect of early Islam, and apart from Abu Bakr, who succeeded the Prophet and who ruled for only two years (632-634), it is noteworthy that three of the four righteous *caliphs*—Umar, Uthman, and Ali (who were close affinal relatives of the prophet)—were all assassinated while performing prayers (Ahmed, pages 33-36).

But some Kharijite sects not only advocated getting rid of an unjust ruler through assassination but were, in essence, religious anarchists, believing that no caliph or imam was necessary. This was preached by the followers of Najda Ibn 'Amir. Described as one of the most extreme of the Kharijite sects, they were of the opinion that people did not really need an imam, but only had to organise themselves to ensure justice and well-being, Najda Ibn 'Amir was himself assassinated in 691, fifty-nine years after the death of the prophet (Mernissi, p. 28).

In his introduction to history, *The Muqaddimah*, Ibn Khaldun, wrote: "Some people have taken the exceptional position of stating that the position of the imam is not necessary at all, neither according to the intellect nor according to religious law. People who have held that opinion include the Mu'tazilah [rationalist philosophers] and certain Kharijites, among others. They think it necessary only to observe the religious laws. When Muslims agree upon [the practice of] justice and the observance of the divine laws, no imam is needed, and the imamate is not necessary" (Ibn Khaldun, p. 157). There is a saying of the Prophet which suggests that "the nearer a man is to government, the further he is from God" (Ahmed, p. 51).

Needless to say, Ibn Khaldun affirmed the need and the legitimacy of royal authority—for divine law censures only the evil resulting from it, not the authority itself—and throughout Islamic history the dissident Kharijite tradition has been harassed and repressed.

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■ DEMANDING THE IMPOSSIBLE, 1999

Demanding the Impossible? Human Nature and Politics in Nineteenth Century Social Anarchism, David Morland, (Cassell)

For many anarchists this book will offer nothing that is new or original, although it is written in a lucid style, is scholarly, and shows a critical engagement with the subject matter—the classic anarchists Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin. As the title almost implies, it is little more than yet another liberal tract attacking anarchism, for it argues that anarchy is 'impossible' and thus anarchism a 'utopian' doctrine. The book should have been titled: 'In Defence of Locke: The Inevitability of State Power'. Interesting dialogues with David Miller and, especially, Peter Marshall, run throughout the text, and the political theories of Locke and Rousseau always hover in the background.

The essence of the book is to explore the relationship between conceptions of human nature and political ideology (anarchism) as expressed by the three social anarchists, Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin. The book is therefore fairly circumscribed. Throughout the book Morland seems to argue that there is no necessary link between metaphysics, i.e. people's conception of human nature, and political theory, a thesis that is completely counter and undermines his own critique of anarchism which is the substance of the book. It has long been recognised, for example, that political theorists like Hobbes, Spinoza, Stirner, Nietzsche and Ayn Rand all placed an important emphasis on 'egoism' and the inherent nature of the human person to maintain their own integrity and power. Yet Hobbes advocated an absolute monarch to counter the negative implications of this egoism; Spinoza a democratic republic that promoted freethought and tolerance; Stirner a form of anarchy, a society of property-owning egoists; Nietzsche the cultivation of an aristocratic, cultural elite, a 'new caste' to rule and revitalise Europe; while Ayn Rand (like it appears Morland himself) a minimal state and a rampant capitalism. There thus appears to be no direct or formal link between people's conception of human nature (metaphysics) and the kind of politics that they advocate. Morland seems to confirm this. He quotes and seems to agree with Parekh that there is no necessary connection between a metaphysical system and a particular political doctrine and writes "a conception of human nature cannot and hence does not delimit the precise kind of society that will emerge from its prescriptive function" (p. 24). As human nature throughout the last few thousand years has we suppose, remained roughly the same, and as human history has evinced many forms of politics (ranging from anarchy—societies with politics but no government—through to the most absolute tyrannies) we presume that the connection between conceptions of human nature and specific political and economic arrangements is pretty contingent. But in order to critique anarchism Morland also has to continually affirm that there *should* be some 'fit', 'coherence' or 'correspondence' between conceptions of human nature and political theory, particularly in relation to visions of the future.

Many political scientists, Morland argues, have tended to suggest that anarchists have a romantic, optimistic view of human nature, entailing a belief in the 'natural goodness' of humans. In an interesting and detailed scrutiny of the writings of Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin, going over well-trodden ground, Morland argues that all three anarchists were not starry-eyed visionaries out of touch with the world, but had a realistic attitude towards humans and to human nature. They thus recognized that both an inherent sociality and an inherent egoism were rooted in human psychology. Such egoism he interprets as covering everything from agency and self-determination to the 'lust for power'. But because they acknowledged human 'egoism' the classical anarchists, Morland contends, could not logically and empirically advocate an anarchist society, a society without a state. Conflating politics and power with coercive government, and seemingly unaware that for most of human history people have in fact lived in societies without governments—on which anthropologists, Barclay, Zerzan, and more recently John Moore have written at length—Morland argues that human 'egoism' renders a stateless society 'impossible'. With 'egoism' there inevitably arise conflicts and disputes, and these, for Morland, necessarily entail state institutions, although for most of human history such conflicts and disputes have been resolved—or not resolved—through social institutions that have no relationship to the state. To bolster his case Morland highlights the inconsistencies and problematic nature of many aspects of Proudhon's and Bakunin's anarchism—long recognized and critiqued by anarchists—and is continually engaged in the *conflation* of moral coercion and public opinion with state coercion. At my mother's funeral I was morally coerced into wearing black, much against my own wishes. But to equate this form of 'coercion' with 'authoritarian' state power is fallacious. Anarchists, of course, have always recognised that public opinion and social norms (not state laws) can be problematic and oppressive.

Morland's essential argument is contained in the following: "Both humanity's egocentrism and the economic and political disputes that will ensue from his egocentrism have to be restrained… Hence the need for the state…. The state's *raison d'etre* is grounded in human nature and politics" (p. 71). Hobbes basically argued this three hundred years ago. But the state—centralised coercive authority—is there not just to keep law and order or to settle disputes—stemming from our egoism—but to promote, maintain, uphold, and, when necessary, defend, systems of social inequality and exploitation, i.e. class interests. This has always been its *raison d'etre* ever since the first states arose only a few thousand years ago. As the old liberal Adam Smith put it, government Is for the security of property, and is, in reality, instituted for the defence of the rich against the poor, for those who have property against those who have none. Not severing politics from economics, the classical liberals had a much more historical sense of what the state is all about than it seems contemporary liberals like Morland who view the state as a neutral referee who simply maintains order and resolves disputes.

Morland concludes the study with two pages of pontification, imploring

anarchists to reject the Promethean ethic and the 'crude humanism' that entails an attitude of domination towards nature. He seems unaware that many anarchists have been instrumental in forging a new ecological perspective, from Humboldt and Reclus in the nineteenth century to Bookchin and Clarke in this.

■ RECLUS, KROPOTKIN AND SOCIAL ECOLOGY

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Elisée Reclus, *Man and Nature* (1995) and Peter Kropotkin, *Small Communal Experiments and Why They Fail* (1997) are both published by Jura Books, Petersham, Australia, and each with an introduction by Graham Purchase.

In his famous book *What I Believe* (1884) the religious anarchist Leo Tolstoy affirmed that one of the basic conditions of human happiness was that of 'work'—what William Morris in that same year described as 'useful work'—work that was creative, productive and pleasurable, as opposed to 'useless toil'. The other conditions of human happiness Tolstoy suggested were physical well-being, a sense of unity with nature and satisfying social relationships both within the family and with a wider circle of people. Tolstoy recognized, like Morris, that work, both physical and intellectual, was an indispensable human activity for it was only through work that humans produce their basic livelihood. The only people who despise work are those who live off the backs of others.

In a well-known essay Bob Black, with some pretension calls for the abolition of work. "No-one should ever work" he writes. But as he defines work as "compulsory production" or "forced labour" his notion that "most brands of anarchism" have believed in work (in this sense) constitutes a wilful *mis-* representation of an earlier generation of anarchists—though this assertion may bolster his own sense of originality and self-importance. As far as I am aware, no anarchist has ever advocated 'forced labour' and critiques of 'wage slavery' under capitalism go back to the nineteenth century. As his own essay indicates, Kropotkin, Pouget, Berkman, Bookchin and Goodman all advocated the abolition of 'work' as forced labour. Tolstoy certainly believed in the crucial importance of work: he recognized too that *both* asceticism and a 'ludic life' (as enjoyed by the Russian aristocracy of his day) were parasitic on the work of others. In fact 'work' (as forced labour) and 'play' are simply two sides of the same coin, and both actively promoted by capitalism. Just as 'modernism' and 'postmodernism' represent two facets of capitalist ideology.

Reclus and Kropotkin were important advocates of libertarian socialism (communism) at the end of the nineteenth century. To label them 'leftists' and to bracket them with Bolsheviks is about as silly as conflating strawberry jam with tomato ketchup because they are both red. Before the advent of chaos magicians, poetic terrorists, troggs, the hidden imam, eco-primitivists and other truly authentic free spirits, Reclus and Kropotkin were widely known as anarchists. But equally important, both men were essentially ecological thinkers. They thus recognized not only the necessity of 'work'—the productive interaction of humans with nature in order to sustain a livelihood—but emphasised that this work should be creative, satisfying and entail voluntary cooperation not coercive labour. Work, as Kropotkin put it, should be a "pleasure and a

relaxation in a society of equals". But they also emphasised the ecological aspects of human productive activity. This meant not only forging economic systems that were sustainable and did not lead to the degradation of the environment, but also respecting the integrity and intrinsic value of the natural world. Graham Purchase is a great admirer of both Reclus and Kropotkin and he has been instrumental in producing two very useful pamphlets which contain early articles by these two eminent geographers and anarchist thinkers.

Man and Nature contains two articles by Reclus. The first is a review of George P. Marsh's classic study *Man and Nature*, both published in 1864, which was one of the first books to critically explore the impact of human activity on the natural world. In his review Reclus notes that the earth has long been modified for human benefit, but this historically has often involved the abuse of power, causing severe ecological problems—deforestation, and the exhaustion of soil fertility which has led in many areas to the 'complete devastation' of the landscape, floods, the extinction of wildlife and adverse climatic changes. This disruption of the 'harmony' between humans and nature had become particularly evident to Reclus in his own day; the industrial capitalists preferring power to beauty, and carried away by the intoxication of work, dreamed only of moulding the earth to their own image. Reclus does not decry the use of technology, nor the attempt to transform the landscape to make it more habitable for humans. But he warns of the ecological dangers of "brutal exploitation" for we are all "children of the earth" and that it is nature that gives us "life, movement and being".

The other article by Reclus, published in 1866, gives a seminal review of the varying conceptions of the natural world that have been evident in the history and the culture of different European peoples. He applauds the increasing "awareness of nature" that has taken place since the eighteenth century, but again emphasizes that the "implicit harmony" between the earth and people must be respected and nourished, and that work must combine beauty and utility, not degrade the environment. He quotes Pliny, "that the great estates have ruined Italy" and highlights the "brutal violence" with which the majority of nations have treated the earth. This has led—reiterating the earlier article—to widespread deforestation, floods, damaged climates and the pollution of the landscape. Reclus pleads that there is a need to retain a sense of poetry in landscape, as well as a love of nature for its own sake. Reclus was a deep ecologist, without indulging in misanthropy, or completely forgetting that we have to work in order to produce our basic livelihood.

The pamphlet on Kropotkin, *Some Communal Experiments and Why They Fail*, includes the essay 'Communism and Anarchy', first published in *Freedom* (1901) and two short notes on the problems of establishing a 'communist colony' as an isolated community. Kropotkin emphasises that 'communism'—the holding of property in common—is essentially an economic institution and may take many different forms. It may lead to liberty and a free life; it may equally lead to oppression and slavery. He also makes the familiar distinction

between authoritarian (or state) communism and anarchist communism. The latter, free communism, involves three essentials: the abolition of the wage system (i.e. forced labour), the abolition of private property, and the emancipation of the individual and society for the state which upholds the 'economic slavery' (i.e. capitalism). But although Kropotkin clearly admired, as Purchase writes, the directly democratic and non-authoritarian peasant village communes, he was highly sceptical of the idea of forming isolated and independent communes. Kropotkin discusses several reasons why such communes have tended to fail: they were isolated rather than federated, limiting the freedom of movement; they became imbued with a monastic or authoritarian spirit, allowing little leisure time for the individual, or any independent life for the family household; they were often modelled on the patriarchal family itself, often to the detriment of the women who became virtual 'slaves of the community'. Purchase thus emphasises that Kropotkin was never an advocate of small, isolated anarchist colonies.

■ GLOBAL CAPITALISM AND ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP

Originally published in *Freedom* (1999)

As we move into the 21st century the doyens of academic sociology and political theory present us with a rather bleak future scenario.

On the one hand, we are told that socialism is a dead letter and that liberal capitalism has triumphed over all feasible political alternatives. One apologist for capitalism, as you may well know, was brazen enough to talk about the 'end of history'. Thus the well-known sociologist Tony Giddens, allegedly Blair's intellectual guru, tells us that we need to orient ourselves to a world "where there are no alternatives to capitalism". Global capitalism rules the world, and all we can do, we are informed, is to argue about "how far, and in what ways, capitalism should be governed and regulated" (1998, p. 43). This will involve according to Giddens, the creation of a new democratic or 'social investment' state—a state without enemies, one that strives not for real social equality but for 'inclusion', a state that is transparent and open and represents 'diverse interests', and, finally, a state that has a 'civilising' mission, not only reflecting but shaping social norms and values. Such is Giddens' famous (or is it infamous) political programme—the 'third way'. That states (e.g. the current United States government) tend to 'demonise' enemies rather than embrace them, that they largely represent and support the economic interests of the powerful, and they are much more concerned with secrecy and surveillance than they are with 'transparency', and that their proposed 'civilising' mission has awful authoritarian implications—all this is lost on this liberal scholar. He does admit however that a healthy 'civil society' is needed to protect the individual from "overwhelming state power" (p. 85). This 'renewal' of social democracy, the 'third way', is all very depressing: it reads like a New Tory Manifesto.

Yet on the other hand, academics like Pierre Bourdieu and John Gray have recently offered powered critiques of global capitalism. Gray's study *False Dawn* (1998) is indeed one long polemic against the neo-liberals—those "ranting evangelists" for global capitalism, as he describes them. Gray argues that free market capitalism is essentially a creation of state power: it is a political project conducted by the United States government. As he writes: "The truth is that free markets ae creatures of state power .... They are a product of artifice, design and political coercion. *Laissez-faire* must be centrally planned" (1998, p. 17).

Free market capitalism was last in existence and heralded during the nineteenth century, when the British Empire (state) held hegemonic power. Such a global free market (capitalism) has however been re-animated over the past two decades by powerful multinational corporations and transnational agencies like the IMF and the World Bank—bolstered by neo-liberal ideology (Thatcherism in its popular version) and aggressively supported by state power. Global (free market) capitalism, in fact, as Gray continually emphasizes, is an "artefact of state coercion", and its extreme rationalist project of social engineering is akin

to that of Soviet communism—which is more accurately described (as Berkman did) as 'state capitalism'. But the shift in structural power from nation-states to global markets and multinational forms has, for Gray, been socially devastating, and has led to what he describes as a "false dawn". (He was earlier a supporter of Hayek and Thatcher!) For global capitalism has created economic dislocation, increasing social inequalities, widespread poverty, social chaos and political instability. In relation to the United States, the costs of free-market capitalism, he writes, has been one "of crime, incarceration, racial and ethnic conflict and family and community breakdown" (1998, p. 216).

In his short book *Acts of Resistance* (1998) the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu also offers a powerful critique of 'globalisation' (which he also sees as a political project), as well as of neo-liberalism—the utopian 'myth' of our time, as he describes it. Bourdieu speaks of global capitalism's destruction of 'civilisation', by which he means the state provision of public services—education, social housing, public broadcasting, and the rights to health, welfare, culture, and, above all, work.

But in stridently and passionately critiquing global capitalism and its neo-liberal ideology, what have these two academics to offer in the way of an alternative to capitalism? Gray, it must be said, has few concrete proposals. Although he often refers to the 'incompatibility' of free-market capitalism and liberal democracy (p. 8), all he seems to suggest is a "plural capitalism" and some form of government intervention to reconcile the "dynamism" of capitalism with social stability. Like the neo-conservatives he is not against capitalism only free-market capitalism. Thus he feels that transnational organisations are needed to create a framework of regulation within which diverse market economies (i.e. capitalisms) may flourish. Dismissing the viability of Keynesian social democracy (upheld by Will Hutton), Gray in his advocacy of a new regime of "global governance" seems to differ little in his politics from that advocated by Giddens. No wonder that he too is an avid supporter of 'New Labour'.

In similar fashion Bourdieu advocates neither the abolition of capitalism, nor of the democratic state: instead he bewails the regression of the state into a "repressive policing" agency under neo-liberal doctrines. Like these other scholars he too advocates the creation or restoration of a social or welfare state to counter or resist the 'scourge' of neo-liberalism: a state exemplified it seems by a future European state. As Bourdieu puts it: what is needed is "to resist the involution of the state, in other words the regression to a penal state concerned with repression and progressively abandoning its social functions of education! Health, welfare, and so on" (1998, p. 34).

The state thus needs to be restored as the "guardian of the public interest". As an old fashioned state socialist Bourdieu thus concludes that alongside social movements and trade unions "a special place should surely be made for the state, national or, better still, supranational, in other words a European state (as a stage on the way to a world state) capable of effectively controlling and

taxing the profits made on the financial markets: capable also, and above all, of countering the destructive action which these markets exert on the labour market" (1998, p. 104).

Unlike Giddens and Gray, Bourdieu clearly identifies with the powerless and with working people, but his message is much the same.

Down-playing the intrinsic and symbiotic (mutually supportive) relationship that has always existed between capitalism and the nation-state, all three academics can only envisage a future where state intervention or transnational forms of governance (the 'social investment' or a future European state) is the only means of controlling the destructive and antisocial aspects—the 'scourge' of global capitalism.

It is indeed rather a bleak vision.

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■ WEBER AND THE ANARCHISTS

Originally published in *Freedom* (1999)

Max Weber and the Culture of Anarchy
Edited by Sam Whinster, (MacMillan, 1999)

The German Sociologist Max Weber has long been recognized as one of the ancestral figures of sociology—along with the likes of Marx, Simmel and Durkheim. His famous essays on the Protestant sects and the spirit of capitalism are well-known and have been the subject of endless debate and controversy. But Weber is not a figure that one normally associates with anarchism. He was in fact an ardent German nationalist, and advocated a rather elitist form of liberal politics. Weber was nothing else if not bourgeois, as he himself continually affirmed. But in this interesting collection of essays a close connection and linkage is explored between Weber and anarchism, for as Carl Levy writes, Weber clearly had a fascination for anarchists, syndicalists and libertarian life-style politics even though they represented the very antithesis of all that he cherished.

The association between Weber and anarchism came about in three ways.

The first is that Weber and his wife Marianne were close friends of Edgar and Else Jaffe, and through them came into personal contact with several anarchists. Secondly, Weber sometimes spent his Easter vacations at the small fishing village of Ascona, on the shores of Lake Maggiore in Switzerland. Situated near Locarno, the village had long been an outpost for radical refugees, anarchists, artists and bohemian intellectuals. Here was situated the Tolstoyan community Monte Verita (Mountain of Truth), and it was here that Bakunin, Kropotkin and Malatesta had all spent some time. Between 1900 and 1920 Ascona seems to have served as a nature-cure resort, an artist's colony, and as an international centre for anarchism—as well as being associated with psychoanalysis (through Otto Gross), Dadaism and the Laban school of dance. And thirdly, like many anarchists around the turn of the century, Weber was deeply influenced by the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche—indeed, through Foucault and Deleuze, the 'spirit' of Nietzsche still haunts so-called post-structuralist anarchism.

Two of the essays in the book are specifically focussed on anarchism, and are of particular interest. Carl Levy's 'Max Weber, Anarchism and Libertarian Culture' gives an absorbing account of the relationship between personality (or rather, personalities) and power politics in Germany and explores the contrast between Weber's liberal nationalism and the anarchism of such figures as Ernst Toller, Gustav Landauer and Otto Gross. All these three anarchists (like Weber) had been influenced by Nietzschean existentialism and Neo-Kantian philosophy, but, in addition, they had also embraced the ethical anarchism of Tolstoy. Weber thought all three anarchists were hopelessly out of touch with the politics of the real world—which for Weber meant German nationalism, a centralising nation-state under the leadership of a cultural elite, and Protestantism.

In contrast, the essay by Ulrich Linse 'Sexual Revolution and Anarchism'

deals specifically with Erich Mühsam. Whereas the anarchism of Tolstoy expressed a certain acosmism (as Weber described it) in its advocacy of pacifism, vegetarianism, and ethical individualism, and was positively anti-erotic, the anarchism of Mühsam (along with Gross and Ernst Frick) was thoroughly libertarian. Mühsam, whom Weber disliked intensely, was a poet, a radical bohemian and an anarchist. He was also an advocate of 'free love', in the sense of polygamous sexual relationships. Weber described Mühsam as one of the anarchist 'riff-raff', while his fellow Munich anarchist Landauer disapproved of his libertarianism. Linse, in discussing Landauer and working class anarchists, appears to see nothing between bourgeois marriage and promiscuity. But he notes that the 'absolute promiscuity' of Mühsam (and Gross—who besides being an anarchist was an associate of Freud and Jung) often led to rather superficial encounters and to sexual jealousy. But politically Weber and Mühsam stood poles apart. Weber was an established academic, a nationalist and reformer, and a spokesman for the cultural bourgeoisie: Mühsam, in contrast, was a bohemian intellectual, an internationalist, a revolutionary and on the side of 'drop-outs' and vagabonds. Weber believed in the liberal state; Mühsam in anarchy.

Apart from Landauer most of the anarchists mentioned in the text have become, outside of German academic scholarship, somewhat forgotten figures, and the lives of some of them ended tragically. The poet Erich Mühsam (1868-1934) participated in the Bavarian revolution of 1919, along with Toller and Landauer. Imprisoned for high treason until 1924, a decade later he died—tortured and murdered—in a Nazi concentration camp. Otto Gross, who had a life-long addiction to cocaine and opium was diagnosed by Jung as suffering from 'schizophrenia'. Freud's biographer Ernest Jones described Gross as a 'genius'—but he tragically committed suicide towards the end of the First World War. Ernst Toller (1893-1939), whom Weber dismissed as a starry-eyed St Francis, was a communitarian anarchist like Landauer. He also committed suicide in 1939, age forty-six. Landauer, of course, was murdered in Stadelheim prison in May 1919. Only Ernst Frick (1881-1956) lived out his years. A 'lanky' Swiss from Zurich and a Tolstoyan anarchist, he spent his last days as a painter at Ascona.

This interesting book, although throwing important new light on Max Weber and his relationship to anarchism, will also perhaps serve to keep alive the memory of these past anarchists and what they stood for (and died) for—a libertarian community.

■ UTOPIAN VISIONS

Originally published in *Freedom* (1999)

Seeing Like a State
James C. Scott, (Yale University Press, 1998)

This book represents anthropology at its best. It is singularly free of the obscurantist jargon and the pretentious word-play that nowadays masquerades as scholarship. This book in contrast is substantive, it attempts to understand a real world outside of 'texts' and 'discourses', and it makes easy and compelling reading. Scott has already written some splendid studies of Southeastern Asian peasantry and their forms of resistance; this book, though more comparative in approach, is similar in style—radical, theoretically sophisticated, rich in empirical detail and *readable*. Its central insights are also inspired by anarchism. Although Scott is a liberal scholar and not an anarchist, he nevertheless acknowledges his debt to anarchist writers like Bakunin, Kropotkin, Malatesta and Proudhon. These were people, he writes, who consistently emphasised the role of mutuality in human life—as opposed to imperative hierarchical co-ordination in the creation of social order. In fact, Scott's book is a development and an exploration of Bakunin's thesis that rule by savants and by the "worshippers of science" would probably only end in tyranny, and that "the domination of life by science can have no other result than the brutalisation of mankind" (Dolgoff's *Bakunin on Anarchy*, 1973, p. 327).

Scott's book is sub-titled *How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed*, and it critically examines some of the tragedies and problematic schemes of the twentieth century—the Bolshevik revolutionary party and the Soviet collectivisation of agriculture; the high-modernist city as envisioned by architectural 'despots' like Le Corbusier, scientific forestry; the compulsory 'villagisation' campaign in Tanzania during the 1970s; and the myopic vision of modern industrial agriculture with its mechanisation and monocropping. All such schemes are examples of state-initiated social engineering. They combine, Scott suggests, an inspiration to the administrative ordering of nature and society (which emphasises rational planning, control, mapping, bureaucratic uniformity) with what he describes as authoritarian 'high modernism', entailing a faith and a self-confidence in science and technology as the essential means of improving human life, by both controlling nature and expanding production. The book is, then, about a utopian vision, shared by Saint-Simon, Le Corbusier, Frederick Taylor, Lenin and Nyerere, and numerous other advocates of scientific management. This vision holds that the rational ordering of all aspects of social life—the application of science to social problems—backed by the powers of the state, is the way to improve the conditions of human life. But state-enforced social engineering Scott contends (and graphically illustrates in this book) rather than leading to increased human well-being has had the opposite effect: it has led to some of the great tragedies of the twentieth century. The combination of

scientism, a vision of a rational order to be imposed on society and nature, and the advocacy of state power has, Scott argues, been disastrous—and its consequences have ranged from development fiascos to the deaths of millions of people through famine or social disruption.

Scott, however, makes it clear that his study is not a plea for free-market capitalism, still less does he pay homage to 'capitalist triumphalism', for Scott argues that global capitalism with its associated markets, industrial agriculture and scientific forestry is just as much an agent of uniformity, regimentation and bureaucratic homogeneity as the state. He does imply however that where the utopian vision of 'high modernism'; goes wrong "is when it is held by ruling elites with no commitment to democracy or civil rights and who are therefore likely to use unbridled state power for its achievement" (p. 89). But he fails to emphasise the important fact that the democratic state is equally enamoured with 'high modernism'. It thus has an unholy alliance with capitalism, supporting industrial agriculture, scientific forestry, and the 'scientific management' (by 'lines') of all areas of social life—community, health, education, welfare. The modern democratic state, as both Foucault and Habermas have explored, has 'colonised' or 'penetrated' the social life-world to a degree that was unthinkable in the days of the 'absolutist' monarchs. Indeed, Scott stresses that the practice and logic of the Soviet collectivisation of agriculture was *akin* to the faith that was expressed by social engineers and agricultural planners throughout the capitalist world.

"The modernist confidence in huge scale, centralisation of production, standardised mass commodities and mechanisation was so hegemonic in the leading sector of industry" that it became an article of faith both in the Soviet Union and in the United States (p. 197). Industrial farming is described by Scott as a "Soviet-American fetish". In a chapter on 'Taming Nature' Scott gives a very good critique of state-sponsored 'high modernist' agriculture under liberal (i.e. democratic) capitalism, geared as it is to "production and profit". He explores in detail its ecological and social costs, as the emphasis is put, in its myopic vision, on monocropping, mechanisation, genetic uniformity and the intensive use of fertilisers and pesticides.

In the final section of the book Scott gives a good account of practical knowledge (what the Greeks called *metis*), the informal forms the situated and local knowledge that forms the basis of practical skills and common sense understandings. Such knowledge, and other kinds of informal processes and activities, always underwrite more complex, formal knowledge, appropriately described as 'disciplines'. But unlike trendy postmodernists Scott does not repudiate science or formal knowledge (any more than did Bakunin and Kropotkin). What he stridently critiques is the *combination* of the imperial pretensions of formal knowledge (rational planning, mapping science) and authoritarian (state) social engineering. What is needed, he concludes, is more respect for practical knowledge and common sense understandings, an active collaboration between the two 'dialects' of knowledge, and, following the perspectives of Albert Howard (an early advocate of organic farming), Albert Hirschman and Peter Kropotkin, a little more reverence for life and a little less strait-jacketing of the future.

■ MYTHS OF MODERN INDIVIDUALISM

Originally published in *Anarchist Studies* (1999)

Myths of Modern Individualism: Faust, Don Quixote, Don Juan, Robinson Crusoe
Ian Watt, (Cambridge University Press, 1997)

Having written a book on Western conceptions of the individual, I naturally approached this study with warm anticipation. And I wasn't disappointed. It is a literary and historical study of four literary figures, all of whom form an important and enduring part of the European literary imagination—Faust, Don Quixote, Don Juan and Robinson Crusoe. Scholarly, engaging and informative, the book explores the historical trajectories and social meaning of these four literary figures, who are seen as emblematic, or as "mythical" testaments, of the new "individualism" that emerged in Europe around the time of the Renaissance. These literary figures were neither classical nor specifically Christian in character, but rather they represent in their basic social attitudes and enduring images, four important "myths" of Western Individualism. I will briefly discuss each of these four literary figures in turn, for Watt devotes chapters separately to each.

The story of FAUST undoubtedly begins with a real historical personage, one George Faustus, who was a "wandering magician" in Germany in the early 16th century. He was a contemporary of Paracelsus and Agrippa, and was associated with the emerging Hermetic tradition, with its emphasis on alchemy, astrology, necromancy and other forms of magic. Faust was thus intrinsically associated with magic, and with heresy. But the figure—myth—of Faust was given literary substance via two publications at the end of the 16th century: Johann Spies's *The History of Doctor Johann Faustus, the notorious magician and necromancer* (1587), and Christopher Marlow's play *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* (1592). In essence the story of Faust is of an intellectual (or magi), a "great knower", who through pride or insatiable curiosity, made a pact with the devil in order to gain occult knowledge of the world. Such knowledge is a source of power and profit, and reflects the primacy of the individual ego—even the deification of the human will.

> A sound magician is a mighty god;
> Here Faustus try thy brains to gain a deity
> (Marlowe)

At the end of the 18th century the romantic poet Goethe reworked the Faust myth, and though playing down the magical dimension, portrays Faust in a similar fashion—as a wandering intellectual who has no home or any real commitments, and who embodies an insatiable "restlessness of spirit".

DON QUIXOTE is in many ways a very different figure to Faust. He is not based on any actual historical person, but is the hero of the Spanish writer

Miguel de Cervantes classic tale: *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Manche*, published at the beginning of the 17th century. Don Quixote is a poor hidalgo, the lowest order of the Spanish nobility, and the book records the escapades, often comic, of this itinerant knight as he roams the world, clad in armour and on horseback, looking for adventures. Watt notes that, by Cervantes time, the military significance of the horse had declined, through the use of the longbow and gunpowder, and that the feudal knight had become something of an anachronism. But having lost its monopoly of military power, chivalry largely became a ceremonial institution, and the "knight errant"—continuing to uphold the ideals of chivalry—became an important figure in romance literature. The word "romance" derives from the old French *romanz*, which originally meant the "roman" language of popular speech, as opposed to the classical Latin of the written text. The important point is that Don Quixote is something of an anachronism, wandering around with his friend, the more solid and prosaic Sancho Panza, attempting to uphold a code of chivalry, but ending up "tilting at windmills". He is a "freelance" individual—note the medieval connotations of the term—disconnected from the world, and looking back nostalgically to a past age.

The contrasting figure of DON JUAN is the literary creation of another important Spanish writer of the early 17th century, Gabriel Tellez (who wrote under the pseudonym Tirso De Molina). Don Juan is the central character of the play *El Burlador De Sevilla* (The Trickster of Seville), first published in 1630. Don Juan is a "trickster" who chief aim in life is, through deception, intrigue and guile, to achieve sexual satisfaction through an endless series of amorous affairs—or rather transient encounters—with women. He glories in the triumphs of his egoism—"antinomian egocentricity" as Watt describes it. Don Juan, it seems, only needs other people so that he can trick them, and indulge in his own sensual pleasures. Watt later in the study explores the spread of the Don Juan legend, in the writings of Moliere and in Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni* (1787).

The story of the fourth figure ROBINSON CRUSOE is well known, being the subject of Daniel Defoe's novel *The Life and Strange Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of New York*, published in 1719. The story relates the adventures of Crusoe, the son of a German merchant, who spent 28 years alone of an uninhabited island. It records his economic self-sufficiency, the transition he made from being a hunter-gatherer to becoming an agriculturalist, and his relationship with his servant, the "man" Friday. Watt explores the economic individualism reflected in Defoe's novel, and shows how Crusoe's behaviour and thoughts reflect the main tenets of capitalism—the rational pursuit of material self-interest and the tendency to treat people as commodities. He notes that when Crusoe, in his solitude, does take notice of the lack of society, he prays, in fact, only for the company of a male slave. Watt goes on to explore the varying attitudes towards the Robinson Crusoe "myth", as expressed in the writings of Rousseau and Marx.

Although Faust, Don Quixote, Don Juan and Robinson Crusoe represent

very different kinds of individualism—the term individual is derived from the Latin *individuus*, meaning "undivided"—Watt, in an interesting discussion, indicates the close similarities between all these four "mythical" figures. All are men. All are "solitary nomads". All are "egoists" who seek personal power or glory, whether it is through magic, chivalry, sexual trickery, or economic self-sufficiency. All are alienated from social life, and lack any close or trusting relationships, either with a local community, or with family or kin, or with close friends, or with women. All express a degree of misogyny, and lack any intimate relationships with a person of the opposite sex. Significantly, the only close social tie that they have is with a trusted male servant—respectively, Mephistopheles, Sancho Panza, Catalinon and Friday. All are thus "homeless" wanderers and have no relationship or commitments to either place, or to the world of nature. All are thus, prototypically, "alienated" individuals, and though Faust, Don Quixote, Don Juan and Robinson Crusoe all pursue different aims and objectives, Watt describes them collectively as "ideological monomaniacs" (p. 122).

The "myths" relating to all those four literary figures were, Watt concludes, in essence, historically new, and they reflected a new emphasis on the social and political primacy of the individual that emerged in the Renaissance period.

All-in-all, this important study, the contents of which I have summarized above, is highly informative, and makes fascinating reading, although there is no in-depth analysis of the economic and political context of the various texts. Anarchists, of course, have always affirmed the individualism and the humanism of the Renaissance period, but they have clearly distinguished the more positive aspects of this individualism from both the republican politics and the mercantile capitalism with which it was intrinsically linked. They have thus affirmed the primacy of the individual (liberalism), but they have combined this with an equal emphasis on the sociality of human life, and on the need for a social order based on reciprocity and mutual aid (socialism). The kind of rampant individualism with which this book deals can only lead to barbarism.

■ BEYOND BOUNDARIES

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Beyond Boundaries: Humans and Animals
Barbara Noske, (Montreal: Black Rose, 1997)

'We and the beasts are kin. Man has nothing that the animals have not at least a vestige of, and animals have nothing that man does not in some degree share.'[1] These words were written by the artist—naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton a century ago. What Seton tried to emphasise in his writings was that animals have complex and intricate forms of communication and sign language, an aesthetic sense, a social system, that much of their behaviour is not learned instinctively, and that animals' express emotions, have a moral sense, subjective agency and unique personalities, and often form close relationships with humans. Deriving his ideas from Darwin's evolutionary biology, and from a close and intimate relationship with animals in the wilds, Seton thus initiated a critique of anthropocentrism and the development of an ecological world-view.

Barbara Noske's book on human-animal relations is essentially a re-affirmation of Seton's ideas. But succumbing to the pressures of 'stereotyped originality', promoted in the groves of Academia (of which Fredrik Barth writes[2]), she is often dismissive of other scholars—setting up radical boundaries between her own position and that of other scholars (especially biologists such as Darwin and Wilson). She seems to imply that acknowledging human-animal continuity without indulging in either biological or genetic reductionism is a rather novel idea, unrecognised by either social scientists (interpreted as radical humanists or dualists) or by biologists (interpreted as crude positivists, mechanists or reductionists). But the book is readable, vibrant, full of good scholarship, and offers some important critiques (even if somewhat biased and one-sided) of various intellectual traditions. Its essential message, however, is an important one, and would have been treasured by Seton, namely that we should recognise the essential continuity between humans and animals, while acknowledging also, and respecting, the differences and the integrity of animal life.

Throughout human history, of course, people of all cultures, even the most radical gnostics, Christian Neoplatonist's like Augustine and Descartes, have always recognised that there are *both* continuities and discontinuities between humans and animals. But the continuity was invariably restricted to an emphasis on bodily form. What Seton explored (and Noske takes up) is that, as Seton wrote: 'No one who believes in evolution can doubt that man's mind, as well as his body, had its origin in the animals',[3] and this, for Seton, was demonstrated by the subjectivity, sociality, conscious agency, moral reasoning and the complex forms of communication that was evident among non-human animals. At the time of course, Seton was accused of anthropomorphism, of 'humanizing' animals, and by the eminent zoologist Hart Merriam, of writing a lot of 'twaddle'. Such ideas, as Noske demonstrates with clarity, are no longer to be considered 'twaddle'.

Noske's book is essentially in three parts. The first part (chs 1-3) gives a succinct account of the domestication of animals, and is particularly focussed on a critical discussion of domestication under capitalism, through what she describes as the animal industrial complex. Using Marx's theory of alienation, she makes an insightful critique of the mechanised and automated system of factory 'farming', comparing the treatment of humans and animals in the production process. Animals are thus alienated from their own productive activity, from other animals, from their natural environment, and from their species—life. They are 'de-animalized'—reified—in being treated simply as things, or as resources to be exploited, not so much for human need as to generate profit.

The second part (chs 4-5) is devoted to examining the 'devaluation of nature' within western science (with the rise of mechanistic science and positivism) and to critiquing Darwin's evolutionary biology, Marxism, socio-biology (Wilson), cultural anthropology (Sahlins) and ethology. These critiques are important and substantive, but in order to promote her position, they often become extremely biased, sometimes verging on caricature. Darwin, for example, is interpreted as still entrenched in the mechanistic philosophy of Bacon and Descartes, as a 'determinist', and as a nihilist, in supposedly banishing 'all-purpose from nature'. Darwin, she writes, views nature as determined by 'mechanical forces' existing in a 'cold, meaningless universe' (p. 66). Darwin thus ends up as a nihilist, a mechanist, and as a reductionist-materialist (positivist). She even implies that the choice we have in biology is between 'mechanism' and 'vitalism' (p. 63) failing to acknowledge that evolutionary biology long ago made this 19th century dualism redundant. This is not all. She also interprets his evolutionary theory as simply an 'historicized version of the old Chain of Being'—which is equally misleading. One wonders if she has ever read Darwin's detailed empirical works, or even the closing pages of the *Origin of Species*.

What was important about Darwin, as many scholars have affirmed, was that he initiated a new ecological world-view: in introducing the idea that humans are not the special products of god's creation but evolved according to principles that operate throughout the natural world; in stressing the intrinsic organic (not spiritual) link between humans and nature; in undermining completely—long before quantum physics, feminist philosophy and deep ecology—the mechanistic world picture, along with its dualisms, its cosmic teleology and its essentialism; in emphasising the crucial importance of openness, chance, probability, and the subjective agency and individuality of all organisms in the evolutionary process; and in suggesting a way of understanding that was both historical and naturalistic. As Jay Gould suggests, he inaugurated an 'historical' science. In thus conceiving the world not as a machine but as a historical process, as an open system, he completely undermined the positivistic conception of causality, along with its 'determinism'. Thus any event or phenomenon can only be explained in terms of a multiplicity of causes, relating to factors on many different—emergent—levels of being. To interpret Darwin as a nihilist, as a determinist, as a mechanist, or as a reductionist, seems to me to indicate a

rather wilful misunderstanding of a marvellous naturalist, who, it is worth noting, was most at home studying such lowly creatures as barnacles, insects and earthworms. The ecological, processual and non-deterministic dimension to Darwin's thought is completely lost on Noske. One gets a much more nuanced and less biased account of Darwin's evolutionary biology in the writings of naturalists like Ernst Mayr and Stephen Jay Gould that in the portrait represented in this book. Both these scholars, with much less pretension, emphasised Noske's essential thesis long ago, namely, the need to recognize the continuity between humans and animals (breaking down the 'picket fence') without indulging either in zoocentrism or the kind of anthropocentrism advocated by de Chardin.[4]

Noske's portrayal of Marxism, social science and socio-biology are also unfairly biased. Although she makes some important criticisms of the perspectives of Marx and Engels—in denying the sociality and subjectivity of animals, and in their productivist emphasis—to suggest that these socialists emphasised that humans could 'transcend' nature or that they advocated the 'domination' of nature is quite misleading. Engels ridiculed the idea that humans could 'transcend' or 'dominate' nature. Again, one gets a much more nuanced account of Marx and Engels' ecological perspective in the writings of John Bellamy Foster.[5]

Although there is some truth in the notion that social scientists have tended to erect a 'picket fence' between humans and animals, this has to be understood within its historical context and in relation to epistemological issues relating to the understanding of *human* socio-cultural phenomena. Thus Durkheim's radical dualism and the emphasis that Boas puts on the autonomy of culture (even Noske herself stresses the autonomy of the 'superorganic') has to be understood in context. For their dualism had an epistemological thrust—in countering biological and psychological reductionism, and racism—and did not imply a dualistic *ontology*. Both scholars—and most anthropologists take their bearings from either Durkheim or Boas—recognised that social and cultural phenomena only had a relative autonomy, and that there are important continuities between humans and animals. Given the focus of their interests—on human social life—it is not surprising that anthropologists have not been overly concerned with human-animals' relationships. But to imply that most social scientists are Cartesian dualists and assume a 'fundamental discontinuity' between humans and animals, and have no interest at all in human-animal relationships is quite misleading—as the writings of Levi-Strauss, Roy Willis, Richard Nelson and Tim Ingold attest.

Noske's critique of socio-biology is important and substantial, although going over well-trodden ground. I have myself made some strident criticisms of the genetic determinism emphasised by socio-biologists like Wilson.[6] But to imply that Wilson is a 'mechanistic reductionist' completely ignores the causal agency of both the organism, as a subjective being, and culture is somewhat overdrawn. I do not think that Wilson would for one moment disagree with Noske's essential premise that 'animals are neither machines nor humans' (p. 157). Although he emphasises the genetic aspects and is obsessed with inclusive fitness,

Wilson also stresses the importance of studying all animals as species-beings, with their own uniqueness, historicity and integrity.[7]

Although the book contains no sustained discussion of social ecology, Noske continually makes dismissive and negative remarks about this tradition. Social ecology is equated with post-modernism, and is critiqued as being anthropocentric, a form of 'human chauvinism', and as having 'very little appreciation of nature's integrity'. Because Bookchin has devoted much energy to advocating a libertarian form of politics, and in defending the integrity of the human spirit as against the mysticism and misanthropy of the deep ecologists, this does not imply the advocacy of an anthropocentric perspective. To equate humanism with Cartesian dualism and the Baconian ethic of the 'domination of nature' is obfuscating. Being a humanist does not imply the devaluation of nature or of animals, any more than being a feminist implies that a person is anti-men. Bookchin himself has stridently critiqued anthropocentrism, and affirmed nature's integrity and its dynamic and creative potential—expressed in all forms of life. As Noske's book is focussed on animal-human relationships, and makes no mention at all of plants (on which all animal life is dependent), it would be rather churlish to accuse her of being theriocentric and as lacking an ecological vision. As for equating social ecology with post-modernism, which Noske continually does, this too is quite obfuscating. No one has berated post-modernism—its nihilism, incoherence, obscurantist rhetoric, vacuous relativism, and anti-naturalism—with more fervour that Bookchin.[8] I am amazed that anyone should equate Bookchin's dialectical naturalism with the cultural idealism of the post-modernists.

This part of the book ends with a succinct discussion of the evolution of primates and humans, although it is significant that there is little discussion of the two factors that were probably crucial in the development of humans and their mode of culture, the discovery of fire, and the symbiotic relationship that formed between humans and wolves, which greatly facilitated the hunting capacities of humans.

I have, perhaps, devoted more space than deserved to the middle part of Noske's book. For it is the third part of the book (chs 6-7) which seems to me to be the most interesting, illuminating and exciting part of the text. In these chapters, drawing on recent field studies of animals, particularly of primates, whales, dolphins, wolves and elephants, Noske demonstrates that, as Seton put it, humans and animals are 'kin'. She shows graphically that animals have developed forms of communication and language—communication is never just an expression of emotion—that they have consciousness and subjective self-awareness that they utilise tools; and that they are socio-cultural beings, co-operating with and caring for each other, learning from each other, and mourning the loss of their kin. But she also emphasises the difference and integrity of each species-being, including humans, for they each have, as it were, a distinctive 'world-view'. Whales and dolphins have, through the use of ultrasonic sounds, an 'acoustic' image of the world; horses and their kind have 'tactile' images, and

listen and speak through their skin; animals such as wolves have 'olfactory' images, and relate to the world largely in terms of smells; and, finally, humans relate to the world largely through vision, although, as Whitehead argued, our basic experiences of the world are also mediated through bodily feelings. This leads Noske to suggest that we should approach animal life as an anthropologist and try to understand *their* world, through participant-observation and empathetic understanding. This too reminds me of Seton, of whom Lincoln Steffens wrote: 'Seton saw in land not only what a painter looked for, but the animals'. He would say 'How deer would love that', or 'squirrels or owls'.[9] This would call not only for an anthropological perspective, but also for the development of a theriomorphic empathy, such as that evinced by many clan-based communities. All-in-all, in spite of the above criticisms this is a very worthwhile and important study.

1 Seton, Ernest Thompson, 1898, *Wild Animals I Have Known*. P.12 (New York: Scribners)

2 Barth, Fredrik, 1994, 'A Personal View', in *Assessing Cultural Anthropology*, R. Borofsky, ed. P.350 (New York: McGraw Hill)

3 Seton, Ernest Thompson, 1909, 'Foreward', in *Life Histories of Northern Animals*. (New York: Scribners)

4 Mayr, Ernst, 1977 , *This is Biology.* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press). Jay Gould, Stephen, 1984, *Hen's Teeth and Horses Toes*. (London: Penguin)

5 See Foster, John Bellamy, 1998, 'The Communist Manifesto and the Environment', in *Socialist Register.* Pp.169-189, Panich, L. and C. Leys eds (Woodbridge: Merlin Press)

6 Morris, Brian, 19XX, *Western Conceptions of the Individual*. Pp132-142 (Oxford: Berg)

7 See Wilson, Edward. O., 1992, *The Diversity of Life* (London: Penguin) *and idem.* 1997, *In Search of Nature,* (London: Penguin)

8 Bookchin, Murray, 19XX, *Re-Enchanting Humanity* pp. 172-204 (London: Cassell)

9 Steffens, Lincoln, 1931, *Autobiography.* P.584, (New York: Harcourt Brace)

■ AGRARIAN SOCIALISM

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Anarchists have often been dismissed by Marxists as utopian dreamers, or as simply advocates of petty-commodity production. It is plainly evident that Kropotkin cannot be accused of either of these failings. As a geographer he was throughout his life interested in practical issues, on how humans could best produce their basic livelihood, and made practical suggestion along these lines. He emphasised that we must "act for ourselves" and that the emancipation of working people must be the task of the working people themselves (AY p. 32). Liberty and social justice could not be attained through either the state, nor through the "dictatorship" of a revolutionary or "vanguard" party: Equally, he put an emphasis on "local action" and considered the idea that the coming revolution would follow "one single programme" all over Europe to be a fallacy (AY p. 44). He advocated the expropriation not the retention of private property, and stressed that the three basic necessities of human life (which he always emphasised)—food, clothing and dwellings—must all be communal. Under anarchist communism, production would be communal—though Kropotkin never denied the freedom of the individual to engage in individual production if they so desired. The management of local affairs would also be communal, organised through voluntary associations; and, finally, the products of labour were to be communal, to be shared according to individual needs. Kropotkin thus repudiated the state ownership of land and capital, and all "nationalisation" schemes; he was equally against private property (petty-bourgeois capitalism) and any form of "wage system" as advocated by Proudhon and many individualist anarchists.

Because Kropotkin was a practical idealist emphasising the importance of local action, and because he felt it was the first and imperative duty of any popular movement to leave nobody without food, shelter and clothing, Kropotkin always stressed the importance of agriculture, particularly self-sufficiency in agriculture (AY p. 62). He did this by advocating self-sufficiency in agriculture almost a century before John Seymour (whose popular books made an important impact in the 1970s). Kropotkin, however, always put an emphasis on agrarian communes rather than on family-households, and on linking agriculture with industry.

One of the criticisms that Kropotkin made of capitalism was that it not only involved the exploitation of the urban proletariat and colonial peoples, but that it also led to the depopulation of the countryside through industrial farming practices (CB p. 182). Geared also to the generation of profits it inevitably neglected the needs of the community as a whole. Thus what he felt was imperative was a social economy, based on voluntary co-operation, which aimed to produce

> The greatest amount of goods necessary for the well-being of all, with the least possible waste of human energy (CB p. 119).

This could never be the aim of a private owner of land, still less that of a capitalist entrepreneur. With intensive agriculture however, organised on a co-operative basis, the essential needs of the people could, Kropotkin felt, easily be procured, and, as earlier noted, he estimated that nobody need work more than four or five hours a day (CB p. 123). This would leave ample time free for leisure activities—which Kropotkin felt essential for human well-being. Like the early Marx, Kropotkin envisaged everybody combining manual work, whether in husbandry or industry, with intellectual and artistic work. Kropotkin with his wife Sophie cultivated throughout his life a vegetable plot, and is so able to write of "the poetry of work in the fields", if this work is voluntary, and under the control of the producer. Work did not have to be drudgery; there were joys in creative work, and Kropotkin saw no reason why everyone, and not just the idle rich, should not enjoy comfort and leisure (CB p. 135). The phalanstery of the Fourierists, an industry managed by a state or party bureaucracy, domestic slavery, huge "Bonanza" capitalist forms—all were anathema to Kropotkin. He is equally critical of the division of labour, which as a productive technique had been lauded by Adam Smith and other political economists. For Kropotkin this essentially meant "labelling and stamping men for life", over-specialisation and the destruction of fulfilling and creative work. The ideal of industrial agriculture, he wrote, is to do away with people—agricultural work—entirely (CB p. 199). Thus Kropotkin advocates the "decentralisation of industry", and the bringing together of workshops, factories and agricultural production, both within the city and in the countryside.

In his essay on "Agriculture" (CB pp. 210-229), Kropotkin repudiates two of the underlying principles of economic science, namely, that people are always and only motivated by self-interest or profit, and that scarcity is the lot of humanity, so that there will always be insufficient goods to satisfy everyone. Kropotkin argues to the contrary; that with the judicial use of scientific knowledge and machinery, and by means of intensive agriculture, especially market-gardening, people will easily be able to produce enough agricultural produce to feed everyone adequately. Although he acknowledges the productivity of large-scale, extensive agriculture on the American prairies, he also highlights its problems—soil exhaustion, its "military" organisation, and the fact that it depopulates the landscape. With intensive agriculture, however, put into practice by a local commune, a limited space may well be cultivated—and improved by manures and concentrated work. Kropotkin was fond of quoting the peasant adage that "the soil is worth what the man is worth".

By intensive agriculture—market gardening, intensive field cultivation, irrigated meadows, greenhouse culture, as well as kitchen gardens—Kropotkin argues that not only could labour be greatly reduced—to a few hours each day—but high yields of a variety of cereals, vegetables, fruit and other crops could easily be produced. This emphasis on agricultural self-sufficiency did not in the least imply, for Kropotkin, an end to economic exchange, but he did recognize that such improvements would entail a social revolution. But to free the peasant

cultivator from the three "vultures"—the state, landlord and banker—was he felt imperative, and Kropotkin saw agrarian socialism which provided everyone with their basic livelihood as more than a "fancy dream" (CB pp. 210-217).

Kropotkin's basic ideas on economic life were published in a series of articles in the *Nineteenth Century* (1888-90), which were later collected as the well-known book *Fields, Factories and Workshops* (1899). Colin Ward described the book as "one of the great prophetic works of the nineteenth century whose hour is yet to come" (FFW II). The book re-iterates many of the ideas that Kropotkin was expressing at the same time in articles in the anarchist journal *Le Revolte*. These too were published earlier in book form (1892), but *Fields, Factories and Workshops* additionally incorporates a wealth of detailed information, both ethnographic and statistical, on economic life in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century.

The book is essentially in four parts, and argues four essential themes. The first is that there is a growing tendency towards the decentralisation of industry, away from large-scale monopoly production. Critical of the idea that each nation had to have its own economic or trade speciality. Kropotkin suggested that there was a growing tendency for industrial production to become dispersed, for the economy of each nation and territory to diversify, and the unit of production to become decentralised. Thus he writes:

"Industries of all kinds decentralise and are scattered all over the globe: and everywhere a variety, an integrated variety of trades grows, instead of specialisation. Such are the prominent features of the times we live in (FFW p. 38)."

Kropotkin recognised, as the sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein was later to explore, that historically there had been shifts in the centre of gravity of commercial enterprise. Since the rise of capitalism in Europe, around the time of the renaissance, economic hegemony had thus shifted from Italy and Spain, to Holland, and finally to Britain during the nineteenth century. But for Kropotkin the decentralisation of industry was an altogether different process, and he thought it excluded the very possibility of future economic hegemony. The history of the past century has proved otherwise with the United States becoming a hegemonic power after the Second World War, and powerful multinational corporations—rather than small-scale industry becoming a dominant factor in economic life.

Secondly, in his discussion of the "possibilities of agriculture" Kropotkin argued that all countries, including Britain could and should become self-sufficient in agriculture. Focusing on Britain, Kropotkin challenges the idea that Britain is so overpopulated that it cannot produce enough food—the population of Britain at the end of the nineteenth century standing at around 46 million people. He challenges also the idea that there is any necessary advantage in Britain being primarily an exporter of manufactured goods—even though at the time Britain imported around sixty per cent of its food requirements. Kropotkin also challenges the Malthusian notion that population will always outstrip food supply, and thus there will always be scarcity, that there will always be an insufficient supply of the necessities of life (FFW p. 78). Much of the problem

of British agriculture according to Kropotkin, stemmed from the fact that there is a high concentration of land ownership, much of the land being in the hands of large landowners; that the land is used as a commodity for the generation of profit rather than for the needs of the majority; and that large areas of land is devoted to game reserves for elite sportsmen as "deer forests" or pheasant-shooting areas. The landscape of Britain, he suggested, had been "starved of human labour", for Kropotkin emphasised that humans were an intrinsic part of nature and that soils could actually be improved in terms of productivity by human activity. He pleads that there are no infertile soils, and that the most fertile soils are not those of the Russian Steppes or the prairies of North America, but rather are to be found where there has been intensive human activity over the centuries—"in the peat bogs of Ireland, on the sand dunes of Northern France, on the craggy mountains of the Rhine"—where soils have been made by human work (FFW p. 54).

Kropotkin based his ideas on agricultural self-sufficiency to a large extent on his own observations derived from his travels throughout Europe. Colin Ward remarks that Kropotkin never seems to have been without his notebook, and certainly Kropotkin had a much more intimate knowledge of agricultural practices that most economists, many of whom had never ventured out of the Academia, or the reading room of the British Museum. Such self-sufficiency could be achieved, he felt, by an intensive and diversified agricultural system, and by integrating industry and agriculture. He details in his book the nature and possibilities of the various forms of intensive culture which we earlier noted: fruit orchards, market-gardening (such as flourished around Paris, in many parts of Southern England, and in the Channel Islands), irrigated meadows, the growing of fruit and vegetables in greenhouses (once the preserve of the rich), and the development of intensive forms of agriculture.

Kropotkin continually emphasises that soils are *made*, that practical knowledge is essential, that micro-climates can be improved as well as the soil, that new varieties can be selected and that, as in Asian communities, plants can be treated on an individual basis. He continually makes a plea for an end to capitalist agriculture, and for the development of small-holdings, integrated into a communal system. It is clearly evident, that Kropotkin is seeking to develop an integrated farming culture that avoids the two extremes; between, on the one hand, the small culture of the French peasant or *maraicher* (market gardener) which retains private property and petty commodity production; and, on the other hand the large extensive farms of capitalist agriculture, worked in military fashion by "labour battalions" which tends to remove people from the land completely, exhausts the soil, and is a form of "robbery culture" (FFW p. 104). Though not spelt out in detail Kropotkin clearly felt that "associated labour", "common tenancy" and the practice of intensive agriculture was the most reasonable form of economic life. Together these would make the best use of the land, enable local communities and regions to be self-sufficient in the basic necessities of life, and reduce the amount of labour devoted to basic production. Kropotkin

recognised that many market gardeners worked long hours with little time for leisure activities; but he nevertheless felt that on a communal basis such intensive agriculture would enable people to produce more with less labour, and that there would be ample time to enjoy the many pleasures of human life (FFW p. 67).

This leads to the *third* important theme of Kropotkin's book, detailed in the chapters on "small industries and industrial villages." This is the need to integrate industry with agriculture—but on a small-scale. Kropotkin does not advocate the kind of industrial agriculture that has developed under capitalism in the recent decades. What he does suggest is the need to combine agriculture, workshops and factories in an integrated social economy that is centred on meeting basic human needs, and also gives people time to engage in leisure pursuits.

The main purpose of a social economy, for Kropotkin, was the "economy of energy required for the satisfaction of human needs" (FFW p. 17). This meant combining agriculture and industry, which during the nineteenth century had been totally estranged. Kropotkin emphasised the viability of small industries, and argued that the efficiency of large-scale production had less to do with the technological limitations of small workshops, than with the nature of production under capitalism—which involved the control of markets and the production of cheap and shoddy goods. The notion that small-scale industry and workshops were doomed to disappear, and that there was a growing "concentration of capital"—accepted by both political economists and Marxists, Kropotkin questioned; and he sought to demonstrate that at the end of the nineteenth century small industries and workshops were still an important factor in the industrial life of Europe. But though advocating small industries and workshops—he notes that watch-making in Switzerland and cutlery manufacture in Sheffield were both centred on small workshops—Kropotkin is not against the application of science to industry and agriculture, nor does he deny that factories may be necessary for the manufacture of certain products. Oceanic steamers, he wrote, cannot be made in the village shop (FFW p. 153). He emphasises too the need for labour saving technology, and saw no reason why "the small car should not be of more general use than it is now"—though he could hardly foresee the problematic nature of a transport system focused almost exclusively on the private car (FFW p. 152). But Kropotkin recognised only too clearly that the "Leviathan" factory under capitalism was a "curse" exploiting men, women and children, reducing work to monotonous toil under unhealthy working conditions, regimented, controlled and involving long hours with little remuneration. There is nothing "natural" or inevitable about "capitalist centralisation" Kropotkin wrote, and it needs to be replaced by a social economy based on small industries and workshops (with the workers themselves the "real managers of industries") that are closely inter-linked with agricultural production. Thus the future economy would combine small-scale industry with intensive agricultural productivity by means of small-holdings—and this was not only Kropotkin's ideal, but it was the expression he thought of growing tendencies within European society.

But this combination of agriculture and industry at the social and economic level, needed to be complemented, Kropotkin felt, at the level of the individual. At the time he wrote it was very common for working people to alternate between agricultural work and industry. Russian peasants, for example, might spend much of the year in Moscow or St Petersburg engaged in industrial work, to return each summer to their native villages to help in the harvesting of crops. Similarly, throughout Europe working people during the summer months often migrated to the countryside to engage in agricultural work—hay-making, helping with the harvest, hop or fruit picking. And Kropotkin firmly believed that it was essential for humans to combine in their working lives both intellectual and manual work. Critical, like the early Marx, of the economic division of labour, which confined working people to monotonous jobs for long hours all year round, Kropotkin called for a social economy in which people would productively engage in a variety of different tasks, both intellectual and manual. And he advocated an integral system of education to allow the development in each individual of a wide range of talents and capacities. This was the *fourth* theme of Kropotkin's study, the advocacy of working conditions and a system of education which combined intellectual and manual work. His basic ideas are summed up with his suggestion that a future society:

> must find the best means of combining agriculture with manufacturing—the work in the field with a centralised industry, and it will have to provide for "integrated education", which education alone, by teaching both science and handicraft from earliest childhood, can give to society the men and women it really needs. Each nation—her own agriculturist and manufacturer; each individual working in the field and in some industrial art; each individual combining scientific knowledge with the knowledge of a handicraft—such is, we affirm, the present tendency of civilised nations (FFW p. 27).

The evolution of social life in Western Europe has certainly not developed along the lines that Kropotkin envisaged, and many have dismissed his ideas as utopian and impractical. Kropotkin certainly had an optimistic temperament, and even Malatesta questioned the viability of his analysis of agricultural production, focused as it was on a few cultivators and the most gifted agronomists and market gardeners in limited areas. As always, Malatesta wrote,

> Kropotkin saw things as he would have wished them to be and as well all hope they will be one day; he considered as existing or immediately realisable that which must be won through long and bitter struggle. (Richards 1965: p. 266).

But faced with contemporary realities, and the acute problems associated with industrial farming—that "Soviet-American fetish" as James Scott describes it (1998: p. 196)—Kropotkin's vision has a relevance and is suggestive of a more

viable and sustainable future—both on social and ecological grounds. The problems of industrial agriculture are well known, and have been detailed in numerous studies. Indeed, Scott, in a chapter on "Taming Nature" gives a very good critique of the State-sponsored "high modernist" agriculture under so-called democratic capitalism, geared as it is, as Kropotkin continually emphasised, to production and profit. Scott explores in details its ecological and social costs, as the emphasis is put, in its myopic vision, on monocropping, mechanisation, genetic uniformity, and its intensive use of fertilizers and pesticides. The main problem of industrial agriculture can be summed up as follows: the treating of land simply as a commodity and as a factor of production; extensive rural depopulation and rural dislocation; widespread degradation of the environment with the loss of wildlife and wildlife habitats; increasing health risks, both to farm workers and to the general public through poisons and contaminated food; the abuse of farm animals through "factory" production methods; and the undermining of subsistence farming and local economies throughout the "Third World"—Asia, Latin America, and Africa (Clunies-Ross and Hildyard 1992).

Kropotkin like many of his socialist contemporaries at the end of the nineteenth century, had a rather uncritical attitude to modern science. He was also unconcerned with population issues and as Colin Ward writes, had a rather "mechanistic nineteenth century attitude to land" (FFW p. 116)—although given the pantheistic sentiments expressed in his memoirs this statement needs some qualification. Nevertheless, Kropotkin put great faith in science and in labour-saving technology to improve agriculture and small-scale industries. But Kropotkin's vision of a social economy that was based on small industries and rural workshops and on a labour-intensive, diversified form of agriculture is a far-cry from the industrial agriculture that now dominates the rural landscape. As a geographer Kropotkin would no doubt have sympathised with present concerns regarding overpopulation—given the finite nature of the earth's resources and energy—and would certainly have repudiated the unholy alliance between capitalism and science.

Kropotkin's "*Fields, Factories and Workshops*" is a prophetic work which has not only had a deep influence on generations of scholars and activists since it was first published in 1899, but its basic ideas still resonate in much current radical thinking and have a continuing relevance. Colin Ward has emphasised Kropotkin's widespread influence, and the celebration of his work in many different quarters. Kropotkin had particular influence on many social reformers who advocated garden-city experiments and decentralised planning—Ebenezer Howard, Patrick Geddes and Lewis Mumford. Geddes, of course, was a close friend and associate of Kropotkin, and shared with Kropotkin a similar philosophy of life—an ecological vision that embraced biology, history and sociology, an emphasis on the co-operative activities of all organisms, and a distrust of all forms of large-scale organisation—although Kropotkin put no emphasis at all on "planning" which implies a continuing state presence (on Geddes see Mumford 1956: pp. 99-114).

Lewis Mumford (1895-1990) was a disciple of both Kropotkin and Geddes, whose work and inspiration he continually evoked and affirmed, although he was an original radical scholar in his own right, and his works on urban life have become classics. Although not an anarchist, Mumford was deeply influenced by Kropotkin, and Kropotkin's presence is evident in almost all his writings, for Kropotkin's *Fields, Factories and Workshops*—along with Geddes' *Cities in Evolution* (1968) and Ebenezer Howard's *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (1965)—made a deep impact on Mumford. Describing Kropotkin's study as a "remarkable" book, Mumford in his seminal study *The City in History* wrote of Kropotkin:

> Almost half a century in advance of contemporary economic and technical opinion, he had grasped the fact that the flexibility and adaptability of electric communication and electric power, along with the possibilities of intensive, biodynamic farming had laid the foundations for a more decentralised development in small units, responsive to direct human contact, and enjoying both urban and rural advantages.... With the small unit as a basis, he saw the opportunity for a more responsible and responsive local life, with greater scope for the human agents who were neglected and frustrated by mass organisation (1961: pp. 585-586, on Mumford's life see Miller 1989).

But Colin Ward emphasises Kropotkin's influence not only on Geddes and Mumford, but on a host of anarchists, reformers, and advocates of intensive horticulture, small holdings and agrarian communes—Tolstoy, Gandhi, Buber, Makhno and Paul Goodman. The libertarian communist Goodman called for a revitalisation of self-governing communities to counter the increasingly centralised and militarist United States government and in a celebration of Kropotkin's book remarked that "The ways that Kropotkin suggested, how men can at once begin to live better, are still the ways; the evils he attacked are mostly still the evils; the popular misconceptions of the relations of machinery and social planning."

He admitted that his well-known book *Communitas* (1947) written in collaboration with his architect brother Percival, hardly contained one important proposition that was not taken from Kropotkin's book *Fields, Factories and Workshops* (Goodman 1948).

Kropotkin's influence and basic ideas, though not always acknowledged, are reflected in many contemporary currents of social thought, and three are worth briefly discussing—the advocacy of intermediate technology by EF Schumacher, the bioregionalism of Kirkpatrick Sale, and the radical agriculture proposed by the social ecologist Murray Bookchin.

Although by no means an anarchist text, EF Schumacher's study *Small is Beautiful* (1974) has become something of a classic and his writings have not only had an important influence on the Green Party, but in the development of

the intermediate technology movement which has responded to his call for a "technology with a human face". Many of his suggestions for an alternative future are important and echo the concerns of Kropotkin and other anarchist communists: his advocacy of appropriate or intermediate technology and the economics of permanence; his criticism of nuclear power and orthodox economic theory; and his suggestive insights on the links between industrial capitalism and positivist philosophy with its anthropocentric "man against nature" ethos. His wider views on agriculture also reflects Kropotkin's essential concerns, given its need to fulfil three tasks:

- To keep humans in touch with living nature, of which they are an intrinsic part;
- To humanise and ennoble the wider habitat;
- And to bring forth the foodstuffs and other materials for human existence (Schumacher 1974: p. 93).

And Schumacher's essay on "Peace and Permanence" certainly reflects the influence of Gandhi, and more indirectly that of Kropotkin. But Schumacher's politics are essentially liberal, for what he advocates is a balance between management and workers, whereby public (state) ownership is utilised to sustain and preserve "non-economic values" (his phrase) debased by capitalism. Many of Schumacher's ideas have been expressed long ago by Kropotkin and anarchist writers. Yet he does not—like Kropotkin—follow the logic of his argument and advocate the dismantling of the private enterprise system (capitalism) and the state. For nowhere does he suggest that we should put an end to the system that fosters the nuclear weaponry that creates pollution that "ravishes nature" and "mutilates man" (his phrases). Misleadingly equating philosophical materialism with the ideology of capitalism, Schumacher rather pleads merely for the re-assertion of orthodox religious values to counterbalance the detrimental effects of the capitalist system. The advocacy of intermediate technology, small-scale operations and giving humans ample room for creativity (all worthy objectives) is set within a Keynesian mixed economy and a plea for spiritual values—"seck ye first the kingdom of God". This is a far cry from Kropotkin's anarchist communism.

Kirkpatrick Sale describes himself as a disciple of Lewis Mumford and EF Schumacher—and his book *Dwellers in the land* (1985) is dedicated to Schumacher. But although he hardly ever mentions Kropotkin, Sale's own writings in essence simply re-affirm Kropotkin's own vision, in his plea for a "return to land" and in his call for self-sufficiency, human-scale technology, mutualism and a decentralised form of politics. Sale's study *Dwellers in the Land*, subtitled the "bioregional vision" presents a commitment not to the pristine wilderness, as with the deep ecologists, but to a regional consciousness in which humans and nature (in all its diversity) are intrinsically inter-linked. Like Kropotkin, the book expressly situates humans in the natural world, and Sale gives priority neither to nature (biocentrism) nor to humans (anthropocentrism) but to their interrelationship—an ecocentric approach. He gives a good, even if brief discussion

of the present ecological crisis—the problems of industrial agriculture, the depletion of fossil foods, deforestation, the adverse climate changes, urbanisation and pollution. Yet though recognising the critical nature of this crisis, and the enormous cultural transformation that is needed to escape global disaster, Sales refuses to side with the voices of doom. Instead, he advocates the need for a new philosophy, a new ecological world view to replace the moribund industrial-scientific perspective. But he turns neither to systems theory nor to religious mysticism, but argues for what he refers to as a bioregional vision or paradigm. What we must learn to become, Sale suggests, are "dwellers in the land", to understand ourselves as participants in and not masters over the natural world—the biotic community or place in which we obtain our livelihood. And in understanding our place in the world, Safe feels that we must learn from these "two great teachers" from "living nature" and the accumulated wisdom and history of humankind (1985: p. 46). However, it was not Schumacher who first suggested this but the libertarian socialists Kropotkin and William Morris long ago.

Sale thus argues that human potential and well-being are best developed in small communities and bioregions rather than under nation-states, and that the economy of these communities and bioregions should be based on stability, conservation and self-sufficiency; agricultural systems being designed to cause the minimum amount of environmental disruption. The need is to create a healthy mature ecosystem where sources of energy are immediate and renewable, the level of resource use sustainable, and waste materials are returned to the earth without any environmental damage. Sale stresses that the self-sufficiency (but not isolation) of a bioregion should be an important aim, in that it tends for economic stability, precludes vassalage to national bureaucracies and transnational corporations, and fosters a more developed sense of community. Such an economy must be based on mutual aid and not on mechanisms of the market, and Sale argues that the latter, based as it is on competition, exploitation and individual profit, must be phased out. Sales cites Schumacher as his support—although Schumacher never really questioned the market economy.

In such a bioregion, the "wealth of nature is the wealth of all" and Sale is against the private ownership of land, advocating only usufruct rights. With regards to politics, Sale suggests a perspective that is essentially close to anarchism—an emphasis on decentralisation, bioregional diversity and shared decision-making.

Sale sees his "bioregional vision" as a realistic vision, one that is practical, grounded in historical research and rooted in American values. These values include: a belief in local control and a distrust in arbitrary power, whether exerted by governments or corporations; a stress of self-reliance and community—power; decentralisatism and an appreciation for the rich potential of individualism; and a concern for the natural world. Such prototypical American, or at least Jeffersonian values, Sale sees as a source of his own bioregional vision.

Although in recent years Sale has come to describe himself as an advocate of "tribal anarcho-communism" it is of interest that Sale distances himself from

the anarchist tradition, and apart from Bookchin, makes hardly any mention at all of anarchist, whether individualist anarchists like Warren and Tucker, or anarchists communists like Reclus, Berkman and Kropotkin. Yet all the basic themes of his "bioregional vision"—an ecological world view, a decentralized and participatory form of politics to replace the nation state, an economy based on mutual aid and co-operation rather than on the competitive market, an emphasis on community and economic self-sufficiency, a stress on small-scale industry, and finally, an affirmation of individual liberty—all these of course simply echo what Kropotkin was advocating around a century ago.

Murray Bookchin, in contrast to Schumacher and Kirkpatrick Sale, explicitly links his advocacy of radical agriculture to the perspective of such libertarian socialists as Fourier, Kropotkin and William Morris. In his pioneering essay on "radical agriculture" (1976) Bookchin draws a sharp contrast between modern agricultural practices, which envisions food production as a business enterprise operated solely for the generation of profit, and which in its "denatured" outlook hardly differs from any other branch of capitalist industry, and both the early forms of agriculture, and the radical approach to agriculture that he advocates. This radical approach seeks to transcend the prevailing instrumentalist approach that views food production as simply a human technique, opposed to natural "resources". Bookchin indeed writes of modern capitalist culture as being inherently "anti-ecological". In contrast this radical approach he quotes:

> ...is literally ecological in the strict sense that the land is viewed as oikos —a home. Land is neither a resource nor a "tool", but the oikos of myriad kinds of bacteria, fungi, insects, earthworms and small mammals. If hunting leaves this oikos essentially undisturbed, agriculture by contrast affects it profoundly, and makes humanity an integral part of it (1976: p. 7).

Like Marx and Wendell Berry—as well as Kropotkin—Bookchin suggests that humans do not simply live in an "environment" which surrounds them and is separate, but rather that humans and the natural landscape "create one another, depend on one another, are literally a part of one another" (Berry 1977: 22). Bookchin, like Kropotkin, therefore emphasizes that humans are an intrinsic part of the natural world, not above it as "master" or "lord" as in the mechanistic philosophy of the seventeenth century. But this is not to deny the uniqueness of human consciousness and insight, "But uniqueness is no warrant for domination and exploitation". He thus advocates a truly ecological outlook which sees the biotic world as a holistic unity of which humanity is a part, and which thus implies a radical agriculture that:

> ...seeks to restore humanities sense of community; first, by giving full recognition to the soil as an ecosystem, a biotic community; and second, by viewing agriculture as the activity of a natural human community, a rural society and culture (1976: p. 8).

Such a radical agriculture, which incorporates a balanced Eco technology, Bookchin sees as essentially libertarian in its emphasis on community and mutualism, and this perspective, he acknowledges, derives from the writings of William Morris and Kropotkin (1976: p. 11).

The spirit of Kropotkin thus finds a resonance in much contemporary literature—in the writings of Schumacher and Sale with regard to intermediate "human-scale" technology and bioregionalism, in the radical agriculture of Bookchin, as well as in the essays on organic farming advocated by Wendell Berry. One of Berry's essays is indeed entitled "where cities and farms come together"—one of Kropotkin's essential themes.

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■ BEYOND GLOBAL CAPITALISM

Originally published in *Democracy and Nature* (2000)

The Subsistence Perspective
Maria Mies & Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen (London: Zed Books)

In his well-known rant *Against His-Story, Against Leviathan!* (1983), Fredy Perlman offers a valuable and impassioned critique of the state—though continually denigrating anthropologists and archaeologists while appropriating all their data and ideas. But Perlman appears to envisage nothing between hunter-gatherers living in an idyllic state of nature and the "Beast"—a rubric under which he collapses civilization, the state (ancient and modern), global capitalism, technology, and even Western culture more generally. The whole universe he dramatically proclaims, is a "labour camp". But given his linear conception of history (he simply inverts the myth of progress), his Eurocentrism (like his mentor Toynbee, African people barely get a mention), and his gnostic vision, Perlman completely denies the existence of the human communities and the moral economy on which not only human life depends but upon which the "Beast" itself feeds, on which it is parasitic and "colonizes". The only response to the monster that is Leviathan (more concretely global capitalism and the bureaucratic state) that Perlman seems to offer is to rant, dance, write poetry, or retreat alone, as a "desert solitaire", into the North American "wilderness—so called".

Anarchists like Kropotkin and Rocker had a much more nuanced understanding of history, and though they repudiated the state and capitalism, as well as certain modes of European thought—indeed all forms of power that inhibited the free development of the individual—such anarchists never indulged in the gnostic dismissal of "civilization" (literacy, metallurgy, city life, artisan production, agriculture) as do contemporary neo-romantic primitivists like Perlman. What is of interest and useful about Maria Mies' recent book *The Subsistence Perspective* (Zed Books 1999) is that it offers us something tangible between the myth of the "golden age" of hunter-gathering and the myth of "progress"—with its capitalist triumphalism, its affirmation of the bureaucratic state and its paeans to computer and mega technology. What Mies, along with her colleagues Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen and Claudia Von Werlhof (all feminist anthropologists), advocate is a re-affirmation of what Mies describes as the "subsistence perspective". This entails a recognition of all those (ignored by Perlman) who are directly concerned with producing and maintaining food and life—women (particularly) through their unpaid domestic labour, peasant communities throughout the world, and those city dwellers who are involved in producing subsistence through the so-called informal economy. Such a perspective means taking a "view from below", focussing on everyday life and politics (particularly of women), emphasizing the importance of control over land and the means of production, and on self-autonomy and the capacity of ordinary people to be independent and self-provisioning. Although the study puts a strong

emphasis on women's liberation and subsistence, and continually affirms the crucial links between patriarchy and both capitalism and the state bureaucracy, Mies' thesis has a wider significance. People, she argues, especially women, don't need to be "empowered" (the familiar cry of development discourses)—what they need is for various oppressors to get off their backs—whether patriarchal men, transnational corporations, bureaucratic states, or such agencies as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The "utopia" that Mies has in mind is of a society that is socialist, non-sexist, non-colonial, ecological, and which promotes social justice—one that is modelled not on the life-style of the ruling class nor on some "future primitive" but rather one based on "subsistence security for everyone" (p. 4). This was the utopia envisaged by Kropotkin, Reclus and Landauer a century ago—though Mies and her colleagues seem singularly unaware of anarchism and the libertarian socialist tradition.

Mies offers a cogent and very readable critique of global capitalism, and the neo-liberal ideology that supports it—though she does not emphasize enough the fact that "laissez-faire" capitalism is essentially a political project, and that there has always been an intrinsic and symbiotic relationship between capitalism and the bureaucratic state. The notion, put out by liberal academics, that globalization and the increasing powers of the transnational corporations has led to the "demise" of the nation-state, or that the state has become a "nostalgic fiction" is, of course, quite obfuscating. As Robert Holton argues "(in *Globalization and the Nation-State* MacMillan 1998) transnational corporations need a "strong state", capable of defending and extending property rights, securing the free flow of the factors of production, and legitimizing capitalist social relations. And as we are painfully aware, the more powerful states—especially the United States—continue to assert their sovereign right to make war, to protect the interests of their own transnational corporations, and to "meddle" (as Kropotkin put it) in all aspects of our daily lives. There has always been a complementarity of interests between capitalist corporations and the bureaucratic state—as anarchists have long stressed.

Mies argues that "globalization" is not a new phenomenon; it is rather as old as capitalism itself, for it constitutes the necessary and continuing "colonization" and "primitive accumulation" that is essential to capitalism. What is new is the integration of all national economies into one global market, and Mies discusses three factors that have been crucial in this global integration—the promotion, as a political project, of free market capitalism by the IMF and the World Bank; the break-up of the Soviet Union, which has led to a new trilateral structure in the world economy, consisting of the USA, the European Union and Japan and their respective spheres of influence; and finally the development of new computer technology and electronic communications. She thus confirms what Wallerstein and others have long emphasized, namely, that capitalism has been a world system since the 16th century, and is based on the exploitation of peripheral countries and agriculture and on the "colonization" of the world, both natural and human. Mies insightfully discusses five modes

of "colonization" that have been intrinsic to capitalism, and draws important analogies between them: the "colonization" (and thus exploitation) of the unpaid domestic work of women, the subsistence production of peasant communities, the informal sector within urban contexts, colonial peoples at the periphery of capitalism, as well as the natural world itself. Within the ideology of capitalism all these are devalued and deemed to be "unproductive", although in fact the "Beast" (capitalism) not only exploits them all, but is dependent upon them for its own functioning.

Mies is highly critical of "wage labour" (anarchists and socialist, of course, have been critiquing what they described as "wage slavery" for more than a century!), but she tends to interpret wage labour as only involving white working class men. Indeed, wage labour is almost portrayed as stable, satisfying and well-paid, and, in being based on "free" contracts and the "exchange of equivalents" (*sic*) as essentially non-exploitative (p. 30). She thus fails to emphasize that wage labour is another form of "colonization", involving exploitation and oppression. Capitalism, from the late eighteenth century, has appropriated through the "wage system" not only the labour of men, but of women and children (as Marx graphically described in *Capital*). The proliferation of so-called "free trade" zones in such places as Mexico and Asia—where factories employ women and children—is therefore neither novel or unique. Work that is low-paid, atomized, unhealthy, and casual, without the protection of labour laws, in contexts where strikes and trade union activities are curtailed or forbidden (p. 47) is almost the norm under capitalism: but it is still a form of wage labour. It is not meant to turn men, women and children into an unpaid "housewife" (as Mies seems to imply) but rather to incorporate them at the lowest cost into the capitalist system. The matchgirls' strike of 1888 and the London dock strike of 1889 were specifically aimed to defend working people—men and women—against this form of labour exploitation. Wage labour takes many forms, and as Wallerstein has argued, is not to be identified with either capitalism, or with men (certainly not "white males"). In the "colonization" of human labour capitalism has utilized many different forms of exploitation—chattel slavery, unpaid domestic labour, peonage, bonded labour, share-cropping, and petty-commodity production—as well as wage labour. The notion that the "proletarian is dead" is not only highly Eurocentric but quite mythical, for the wage system, the commodification of labour and its exploitation through the market, is more ubiquitous, more intrusive, and more widespread now than at any other time in human history. Although it is important to emphasize the exploitation of women—both within the domestic sphere and as cheap wage labour—it cannot be the "dream of all capitalists" to turn all labour into unpaid work ("housewifeisation"—what a dreadful term!), as Mies suggests, for who would then have money to buy the commodities produced? This was one of the important contradictions of capitalism highlighted by Marx.

Miles gives an equally good account—and a refutation—of all the basic tenets of neo-liberalism, the ideology of capitalism. These include the following:

1. The notion that humans are by nature competitive, aggressive, acquisitive and self-centred—ignoring the fact that humans are also caring, altruistic, loving and generous. Private property is thus not an expression of human nature.

2. The idea that scarcity is the lot of humans and that our needs are infinite—whereas all our basic needs for food, shelter, clothing and warmth are not insatiable but can in fact be satisfied here and now.

3. The notion that before the rise of capitalism people in subsistence economies—whether hunter-gatherers or peasants—lived under conditions of starvation or abject poverty, and that life was thus "nasty, brutish and short" (in Hobbes' famous phrase). This tenet has little basis in fact, as anthropological studies have shown.

4. The tenet that work is productive and to be counted only if it generates a profit, whereas in fact, work is truly productive only if it produces and enhances human life, that is, it has a use value, the satisfaction of human needs. This means not the abolition of "work" but the repudiation of the "wage system" and of all coercive and exploitative forms of labour. Mies affirms that work, especially if you are in control of it yourself, can be an important source of satisfaction, creativity and self-affirmation.

5. The notion that economic "growth" and technological innovation is the answer to all our problems. Not only are there limits to "growth" (given the finite nature of the earth) but Mies emphasizes that it is a fallacy to assume that technology is necessarily labour-saving or the answer to ecological problems. The opposite may well be true, for she emphasizes the close association between computer technology and sweat shops—the super-exploitation of young women—and like Bookchin and others, stresses that global capitalism is "fundamentally hostile" to humans as social beings, to women, and to the natural world (p. 46). But unlike Perlman and his neo-primitivist acolytes, Mies is not "anti-technology" but rather affirms that both science and technology should be consonant with a "subsistence logic" rather than support the logic of capitalist accumulation (p. 60).

Mies thus succinctly repudiates all the underlying assumptions of neo-liberal ideology.

We need to continually remind ourselves, Mies suggests, that "life comes from women and food comes from the land" (p. 80). Agriculture, a quintessential human activity that is centred on the cultivation of the soil, and the peasant economy are therefore "decisive components" in Mies' conception of a subsistence perspective. In this she contrasts markedly not only with generations of Marxists, who locate themselves firmly within the urban context and identify with the industrial proletariat and the factory system (dear Lenin is instructive

on this) but also with the deep ecologists, neo-primitivists like Perlman and environmental philosophers who dream of a "wild nature" and the untouched wilderness (to which hunter-gatherers are assimilated) and completely neglect to mention agriculture. Mies, in contrast, takes the land and agriculture as key elements in developing a subsistence perspective, recognising that we depend upon the earth and the agri-culture for our daily food. She emphasizes too that many of the landscapes people love and enjoy in Europe—meadows and heathlands for example—are the product of a farm culture. But given the contempt that is expressed towards subsistence farming and towards those who take care of the basic necessities of life, she notes how "peasant" has become a term of abuse and derogation. Indeed, the disdain expressed towards the peasantry, by Marxists and the promoters of capitalism, is matched by their evolutionary faith in the wonders of technology.

Three things have to be kept in mind, Mies suggests, in the understanding of a subsistence perspective. The first is that she envisages a "yawning gap" between capitalist-intensive industrial farming which, as Kropotkin long ago emphasized, depopulates the rural landscape and is based on the "pillage of nature", and the peasant economy (p. 102). The latter entails a mixed agriculture and a decentralized regional economy based on the satisfaction of human needs not profit.

Secondly, the subsistence perspective does not imply a romantic return to the medieval economy, but rather, Mies insists, on the repudiation of patriarchal relations, the utilization of appropriate technology in developing a small-scale integral agri-culture, and thus the need to "re-invent a subsistence-oriented form of economy and existence that is suited to conditions at the end of the twentieth century" (p. 83).

Thirdly, as an anthropologist Mies recognizes that exchange relations have existed throughout human history, and that a rejection of the capitalist market economy does not imply communal or household autarky. What Mies envisages however is not anarchist communism but rather subsistence trading and a market economy that is not orientated towards profit but geared to basic needs and use-values. This would necessarily entail not only the development of a different form of agriculture and the economy, but a different conception of the city, and of the relationship between the city and its hinterland—the "country".

Besides its central advocacy of a subsistence perspective, Mies' text is enlivened by a number of human interest stories, as well as containing valuable critiques of three somewhat overrated scholars who have become icons among contemporary academics—Andre Gorz, Garret Hardin and Judith Butler. The neo-Marxism of Gorz, Mies critically suggests, puts an inordinate emphasis on high-tech industrial production and on the state and other organs of centralized power in order to effect an equitable distribution of "socially necessary labour". Gorz thus ends up, Mies writes, "with fantasies of totalitarian structures of power" (p. 83). Murray Bookchin, of course, made some equally incisive criticisms of Gorz's technocratic Marxism more than a decade ago. Garret Hardin's

famous essay on "The Tragedy of the Commons", published in 1968, has been the subject of endless debate among environmental philosophers. Mies cuts through all the philosophical cant, demonstrating the limitations of Hardin's thesis—which was that communal ownership leads inevitably to environmental degradation. She indicates that Hardin's essay was based on "cultural ignorance", for Hardin singularly lacked any real knowledge of actually existing "commons", and that it was largely a manifesto for free-market capitalism, one that ignored women and the natural fecundity of the earth. Hardin, she writes, was quite unable to conceive of nature other than as a resource, and could not imagine a human community caring responsibly for the "commons" and for the natural world more generally (p. 163).

Mies offers further insightful reflections on the issue of the "commons", emphasizing that the "commons" cannot exist without a community, in the sense of a oikonomia (ie the reproduction of humans within a social and ecological environment), and that the current discourse on the "global commons" and "global resource management" by the IMF and the World Bank, as well as by some ecologists, is simply a ploy to enable transnational corporations to further "colonize" and exploit the natural world. This entails not only wresting control of the "commons" from local communities (and thus gain access to land and raw materials) but also through what Vandana Shiva calls "biopiracy", the appropriation of indigenous knowledge by means of new "patent laws" relating to "intellectual property rights". This is a new form of "enclosure" that enables capitalist corporations to privatize and control the world's biotic resources.

Mies also makes some cogent and timely criticism of Judith Butler and other postmodern feminists—along with their male cultural heroes (Lyotard, Lacan, Derrida, Foucault)—indicating that in their anxiety to avoid essentialism (biological reductionism) and universalism, such postmodernists have not only "depoliticized" the woman's movement (making it respectable for academic male-stream) but have promoted a new form of "idealism" which has virtually displaced women as mothers, denied the reality of the material world, as well as abandoning such radical concepts as patriarchy, capitalism and exploitation. There is an "exact fit", Mies argues, between postmodern idealism and the capitalist triumphalism or neo-liberalism (p. 201).

In opposition to neo-Marxism (Gorz), capitalist ideology (Hardin) and postmodern feminism (Butler), Mies advocates a subsistence perspective that reaffirms the following tenets:

1. That as humans are earthly creatures, wealth, freedom and happiness can only be obtained if we respect the limits of nature, and create an economy that is focussed around land and subsistence agriculture. Human well-being cannot be achieved by some kind of transcendence—whether through money, religion, or the cultivation of some postmodern or technocratic "virtual reality" (p. 203).

2. That there is a need to establish a decentralized, regional economy, one entailing a reciprocal relationship between the city and the countryside, and the self-rule (autonomy) of local communities through direct democracy. The advocacy of "global governance" to counter the negative effects of global capitalism (proposed by deep ecologists like Arne Naess as well as by countless neo-liberals) will only lead, Mies argues, to a kind of "totalitarian regime"—and the end of everything that is understood by democracy, liberty and self-determination (p. 220).

3. That the economy must be re-embedded in social life, and be in essence a moral economy that is based on self-reliance and autonomy, mutual aid and subsistence trading, thus securing human well-being not the generation of profit. It would be an economy which promoted biological and cultural diversity, not one based on "technocratic domination" over either nature or other human beings.

4. That politics ought not to be divorced from everyday life and subsistence, and thus be conceived, as in the Greek polis, as an elitist male activity separated from the household (oikos) and daily concerns (p. 210). Politics should not function through elections, delegations or parties but directly involve everyone, and be based on consensus and direct democracy

All this, of course, has a familiar ring to anarchists, for Kropotkin and the social anarchists long ago sketched the essential features of what Mies now describes as a "subsistence perspective". Indeed, all the basic tenets of Mies' political philosophy—the "direct democracy of local communities" (p. 219)—are hardly new or original, although Mies' call for a "new politics" incorporates a valuable feminist perspective. Anarchists have also long ago debated and disputed the limitations of consensus politics and the role of assemblies in local decision making, the place of the market and the nature of exchange relations in any future decentralized economy, and how best to implement the social ideal of "to each according to their needs", although Mies seems unaware of these long-standing debates. But even more curious is the fact that after offering a sustained defence of the subsistence economy and decentralized politics, Mies should end up envisioning the continuing relevance and importance of not only the nation-state but of wage-labour! (pp. 219-221).

■ EQUALITY AND THE CAPTIVE STATE

Originally published in *Anarchist Studies* (2002)

Equality
Alex Callinicos, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000)

Captive State: The Corporate Takeover of Britain
George Monbiot, (London: Macmillan, 2000)

The rise of new anti-globalisation and anti-capitalist movements in the last decade has prompted considerable reflection on the existing and future relationship between neo-liberal economics and democratic states. Two excellent contributions to this debate, neither written from an anarchist perspective, are George Monbiot's *Captive State* and Alex Callinicos' *Equality*.

Monbiot's book details what he describes as the 'corporate take-over of Britain'. A fine example of investigative journalism, readable, well-researched and written with some passion, Monbiot examines how—aided and abetted by the state (New Labour)—private corporations are taking over the control of many of Britain's institutions. Whether through sponsorship, privatisation or the infamous 'private finance initiative', these processes are affecting the planning, building and operating of new roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, supermarkets, prisons and rail links. This 'corporate takeover' bypasses public accountability and allows companies such as Monsanto to use their financial muscle to 'bend' both local and national governments to their will. At an international level the World Trade Organisation ensures the continuity of this agenda.

Monbiot's conclusion is that: "The struggle between people and corporations will be the defining battle of the twenty-first century. If corporations win, liberal democracy will come to an end' (p. 17). The problem with this argument is that it is based on the premise that in the past the liberal state was 'free' and 'accountable' to the populace, representing the interests of the majority of the people. There have always been symbiotic relationships between capitalism and the liberal state (clearly expressed by Locke and Adam Smith); we are just witnessing a new form of the 'colonisation' of social life for the sake of profit.

Callinicos' book *Equality* is written in an altogether more academic style and is as substantive as his previous theoretical works critiquing postmodernism and the 'Third Way' politics of Anthony Giddens. The book combines philosophy with socio-economic analysis, managing to offer a readable account of the concept of 'equality' as well as a trenchant critique of the politics of New Labour. Callinicos begins the book by outlining what has now become common knowledge, namely that the triumph of liberal capitalism has produced quite staggering levels of social and economic inequality and poverty. He provides plenty of examples of this, such as the fact that in the past decade the richest two hundred people in the world have doubled their assets to $1,042 billion,

the latter figure being equal to the total income of 41 per cent of the world's population.

The second chapter deals with the historical meaning and emergence of the concept of 'equality', which is particularly associated with the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, in its struggles against absolutism. Callinicos argues that, despite the limitations of the 'rights of man'—not extending to women, slaves or the unpropertied classes—this 'did not imply the abandonment of equality as an ideal' but, rather, led to 'its radicalisation' (p. 22). Here he discusses the extension of the concept of equality in the writings of Marx, Tawney and Crosland, emphasising the intrinsic relationship between freedom and equality—a point stressed by Bakunin in opposition to Marx.

Callinicos moves on to examine the influential thesis of 'egalitarian liberalism', as advocated by Rawls, Dworkin and Sen; in particular, he notes the problems in Rawls' famous 'difference principle'. This was the suggestion that all social values—income, wealth, liberty, self-respect—should be equally distributed 'unless an unequal distribution' of these goods 'is to the advantage of the least favoured' (p. 46). Callinicos argues that this normative stress on 'equality' is completely divorced from empirical reality, because these liberal philosophers favour a social democratic rather than anti-capitalist understanding of social justice.

Appropriately enough, the final chapter deals with the issue of equality in relation to contemporary global capitalism and the 'Third Way' politics of New Labour. Callinicos shows conclusively that New Labour's attempt to reduce inequality or poverty in Britain is misconceived, incoherent, and involves a good deal of self-deception. For example, that you can reduce inequalities without giving offence to the rich and the powerful—Peter Mandelson indeed described New Labour as the 'party of business'—or, alternatively, that you can combine egalitarian aims with a neo-liberal economic policy. Thus Blair's embrace of economic liberalism coupled with a moral authoritarianism can be said to have more in common with early twentieth century liberals such as Asquith than with any variety of socialism. Callinicos therefore concludes that to 'demand equality is to propose revolution' (p. 128) and that egalitarian justice can only be achieved 'against capitalism'. Thus, like Monbiot, Callinicos offers a timely and sustained critique of neo-liberal capitalism in general, and the Blair government in particular.

■ WAS NIETZSCHE AN ANARCHIST?

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Nietzsche is now all the rage in academia. The man who spent much of his solitary life wandering southern Europe as an "eternal fugitive" (his own words), looking for some place or climate that might ease or stay his deteriorating health, has now become the academic icon of those apocalyptic thinkers, the post-modernists. As Bakunin, Kropotkin and Malatesta have been declared obsolete, Nietzsche has replaced them as an icon for certain anarchists. Indeed, the question has often been asked, was he an anarchist himself?

The simple answer is no, and Nietzsche himself explicitly repudiated everything anarchism stands for. In *Twilight of the Idols*, he wrote that the Christian and the anarchist were "both decadents; both incapable of producing anything but dissolution, poisoning, degeneration, both blood suckers, both with the instinct of deadly hatred towards everything that stands erect, that towers grandly up, that possesses duration, that promises life a future".

He was equally critical and disparaging of socialists, who he called 'dolts', 'blockheads', 'decadents' and 'buffoons'. He insisted that they advocated "the collective degeneration" of humanity into the "perfect herd animal" (*Beyond Good and Evil*). Ordinary working people were tarred with the same brush, and he spoke of them with disdain - 'crowd', 'herd', 'rabble'.

Like his early mentor Schopenhauer, Nietzsche had a very low regard for ordinary people, though this "hermit of Sils-Maria" (where he spent his summers) knew precious little of their sufferings, aspirations or social life. As many have argued, his strident individualism and aestheticism left very little room for community, still less for family life.

The reason for his disparagement of anarchism, socialism and ordinary people is that Nietzsche simplistically linked them to the "slave morality" which he contrasted with the "master morality" of the nobility and ruling elite. This "slave morality" (which he associated with Buddhism and Christianity as well as socialism, democracy and anarchism) he linked to humility, servility, pity, envy, secrecy, reaction and compassion, all motivated by "resentment"—what Tory Prime Minister John Major called "the politics of envy", attributed to anyone who complained about the rampant inequalities of global capitalism.

In contrast, the "master morality" of the rulers and aristocratic elite was characterised by courage, openness, strength, power, nobility, sensitivity, pride and self-control. The slaves and ordinary people were 'rabble', the rulers 'good men' (though Nietzsche never condoned the elite's cruelty). Although he presented, in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, a strident critique of the state and is alleged by his disciples to have been 'anti-political' and concerned only with the Dionysian aesthetics of 'self-making', in fact throughout his writings he supported and expressed allegiance to those in power.

He sided with the 'strong', the 'rulers' and the aristocrats—and directed his most venomous opinions towards the lower classes, the slaves, the workers, the

'rabble'—especially if they dared resent or challenge the hierarchy. As Kropotkin said, "Nietzsche did not understand anything about the economic workers' revolt. The great Nietzsche, for he was great in a certain revolt, remained a slave to bourgeois prejudice". His "revaluation of all values" did not extend to challenging aristocratic values of hierarchy, class structure and economic forms of exploitation.

He was akin to Aristotle in his defence of slavery and, almost devoid of sociological perspective, seems to have assumed that there would always be 'slaves' to provide the daily bread for the aristocratic elite or 'overmen' in their solitary wanderings, and in their Dionysian affirmation of the "will to power".

So it's no surprise to find that Nietzsche heaped praise on the Indian caste system and its ranked hierarchy, or that he did little but insult and disparage the lower castes—the Chandalas, who he thought had a "feeling of contentment" in their servitude! The "laws of Manu" upholding this system of social inequality certainly met with his approval.

The whole idea of a free society or of equal rights was anathema to him. He simply equated them with the diminution of humanity, and saw them as conducive to the development of the "perfect herd animal". He wilfully misinterpreted both anarchism and socialism in suggesting that they sought to reinstitute a system of slavery (and of course he found both guilty of forgetting the need for an aristocratic elite).

Social life, Nietzsche argued, should simply form "the foundation and scaffolding upon which a select species of being is able to raise itself to its higher task and in general to a higher existence" (*Beyond Good and Evil*). The essential thing was to have a "good and healthy aristocracy".

Small wonder he considered the idea of equal rights for all a poisonous doctrine. Even in his criticisms of modernity, which he equated with liberal democracy, he advocated as an alternative ideal not anarchist communism, nor any other form of libertarian socialism, but the Roman Empire and Russian Tsarist state. Both, he felt, would uphold tradition and authority.

His notion of freedom was linked to this kind of reactionary ethos. Freedom, he wrote, "means that the manly instincts that delight in war.... have gained mastery over other instincts". Fearing the reduction of everyone to the status of 'herd animal' (he erroneously assumed that this was what socialists and anarchists were plotting), Nietzsche arrived at a notion of freedom which was one of heroic valour, strength and a rampant and solitary individualism—high in the mountains, of course, and dependent on the people of the valley, the 'rabble' who produced his subsistence.

The thinkers of the Enlightenment had had faith in empirical knowledge and a belief in progress. They may have been a little naïve in their enthusiasm for the betterment of humankind, but to blame them for the atrocities of the twentieth century would be as simplistic as blaming Jesus for the inquisition.

Nietzsche was thoroughly reactionary in counterposing the Enlightenment belief in progress with that of the aristocratic belief in authority and tradition.

As he cogently put it (again in *Beyond Good and Evil*), "deep reverence for age and the traditional … prejudice in favour of the ancestors … is typical of the morality of the powerful: and when, conversely, men of 'modern ideas' believe almost instinctively in 'progress' and 'the future' …. this reveals clearly enough the ignoble origin of these ideas".

Nietzsche was not a postmodernist but a thoroughly reactionary, 'pre-modern' thinker. He has long been renowned as a thoroughly misogynist thinker too, though some postmodernists (Derrida, for example) seem to portray him as an out-and-out feminist. One day some postmodernist will 'deconstruct' Hitler's *Mein Kampf* as well, to show that its author was really a pacifist!

As we are told that all language is metaphorical, that there are no stable meanings, that Nietzsche's writing style is consistently ironic, perhaps there is no way of knowing whether or not he was anti-feminist. But if we take him at his word, he hated feminism and considered it (like socialism) thoroughly decadent. Read the following and see if he was a feminist or not (as for the racist stereotype—don't even go there). "A man who has depth, in his spirit as well as in his desires … can think of woman only in an oriental way—he must conceive of woman as a possession, as property with lock and key, as something predestined for service".

In suggesting that marriage as an institution shouldn't be based on love, he also wrote (in *Twilight of the Idols*) that "one establishes it on the basis of the sexual drive, the drive to own property (wife and child conceived of as property), the drive to dominate which continually organises the smallest type of domain, the family". Some feminist!

In *Naturalism and Culture*, Rudolf Rocker said Nietzsche's life showed a "constant oscillation between outlived authoritarian concepts and truly libertarian ideas". There was undoubtedly a libertarian aspect to his philosophy—his solitary form of individualism with its aesthetic appeal to self-making, the radical critique implied in his "revaluation of all values", his strident attack of the state in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* and his impassioned celebration of personal freedom and power.

But this was more than offset by his thoroughly reactionary mindset—his elitist politics, his celebration of authority and tradition, his complete lack of any progressive vision apart from the notion of an isolated asocial nomad, the 'overman'. Perhaps a later philosopher, Bertrand Russell, described him best when he called him an "aristocratic anarchist".

■ IN DEFENCE OF MICHAEL BAKUNIN

Originally published in *Anarchist Studies* (2006)

Mikhail Bakunin: The Philosophical Basis of his Anarchism
Paul McLaughlin, (Algora Publishing, New York 2002)

Harassed, abused, jailed, denigrated, ridiculed, misunderstood in his own day, poor old Bakunin has long been treated by Marxists and liberal scholars alike in the most appalling and derogatory fashion. In recent decades something of an anti-Bakunin bandwagon has grown within anarchist publications as well. Derided by everyone from postmodernists to primitivists, many of these attacks have been highly personalised, petty, and largely repetitions of reactionary opinion from long ago. Such treatment motivated me a decade ago to write a short book on the remarkable life and political philosophy of Michael Bakunin, for in a real sense old Bakunin was one of the first to outline social anarchism as a coherent philosophy. I did not have any particular fondness for Bakunin—he was certainly not without his foibles, ethnic prejudices and political misjudgements—but his ideas about capitalism, state power and religion have a contemporary relevance in the same way as the ideas of Darwin still have the salience of evolutionary biologists.

Against the backdrop of attempts to bury him, there has been a genuine renewal of interest in Bakunin in recent years, and this is reflected in Paul McLaughlin's excellent study. Focussing more on the philosophical foundations of Bakunin's social thought that his anarchism per se, the book also provides a spirited and scholarly defence of these ideas against liberal and Marxist critiques. Combining the logic of negative dialectics with an ontology of evolutionary naturalism, Bakunin's philosophy might be best described as an embryonic form of dialectical naturalism, the perspective associated with Murray Bookchin. Such ideas are therefore indicative of a stance that is far from the mechanistic materialism frequently assumed by his detractors.

The Critics of Bakunin

In my book I tried to defend Bakunin against both his Marxist and liberal critics. Marx famously described Bakunin as a philosophical 'ignoramus', and Marxists have invariably following their mentor in describing Bakunin as a petit-bourgeois ideologist like Proudhon, or a misguided romantic with a bent for destruction and secret societies, and pour scorn on Bakunin for his 'elitist despotism'. Hal Draper, for example, saw Bakunin as essentially a revolutionary brigand, whose politics involved little more than pillage, theft and murder, while Lichtheim wrote that all that Bakunin's anarchism entailed was a 'chiliastic vision of an armed uprising that would smash state and society' (Morris, 1993: p. 136). Thankfully, McLaughlin continues and develops my defence of Bakunin and offers a strident critique of his Marxists critics, whom he felt were critical of Bakunin mainly because the anarchist had dared to challenge the philosophical

doctrines and statist politics of their hero Marx. McLaughlin notes that the Marxist scholars who dismiss Bakunin as a 'voluntarist' (in being ignorant of the political economy) or as an apolitical 'bandit', never actually studied in depth the theoretical writings of Bakunin. McLaughlin focuses his own analysis on two Marxists scholars, George Lichtheim and Francis Wheen. Lichtheim, as noted, had portrayed Bakunin as a mindless revolutionary, a misguided romantic with an insatiable faith in the goodness of humankind, yet one who, nevertheless, was bent on 'pan destruction'. This portrait of Bakunin McLaughlin fervently critiques, suggesting rather than being a hopeless romantic bent on destruction, Bakunin had his roots in the Enlightenment tradition, and that his main philosophical interests were in the development of Enlightenment naturalism and 'anti-theologism' (p. 4).

With regard to Wheen's biography of Marx, which includes a chapter on Bakunin entitled 'The Rogue Elephant', McLaughlin suggests that this chapter is simply a regurgitation of what Marxists have been writing about Bakunin for many decades, and that the truth value of the chapter approaches zero. The 'superfluity of this work, the idiocy of its tone, and the poverty of its content overall' meant, for McLaughlin, that Wheen's account of Bakunin lacked any scholarly merit (pp. 5-6).

Liberal scholars have been even more hostile to Bakunin. Eugene Pyziur also claimed that Bakunin was the 'apostle of pan destruction' and thereby a precursor of Bolshevism; Bakunin's early biographer E.H. Carr thought him an advocate of 'extreme individualism', in essence a Hegelian idealist and a precursor of Italian fascism. The eloquent liberal scholar Isaiah Berlin, in one highly biased essay, declared that Bakunin, for all his love of humanity, was like Robespierre prepared to wade through 'seas of blood' to achieve his political aims, and that Bakunin was thus akin to Attila and had a 'fascist streak' (Morris, 1993: p. 73). Even more crude is Aileen Kelly's portrayal of Bakunin as a prototype alienated individual, which is subtitled 'a study in the psychology and politics of Utopianism'. Showing little interest in either Bakunin the person or in his anarchism—which is dismissed as of 'little merit'—Kelly largely repeats the oft-heard diatribe of Bakunin the fanatical, gullible idealist, completely out of touch with reality.

McLaughlin's treatment of these liberal works on Bakunin is substantial and refreshing, particularly in drawing attention to their lack of thoroughness or honesty. It is ironic, then, that Berlin's famous distinction between positive and negative freedom is actually filched from Bakunin's own writings (p. 17). Similarly, Kelly's apparently scholarly treatment of Bakunin as a Bolshevik in the making fails to appreciate the inherent critique of the Stalinist tendencies within Marxism that is so central to his social anarchism (p. 12).

McLaughlin's book consists only of two long chapters or parts: one on Bakunin's negative dialectics, the other on Bakunin's naturalism and his critique of theologism—which for Bakunin meant not only religious ideologies, but also the idealist metaphysis of Kant and Hegel. I will discuss each of these in turn.

Negative Dialects

As one of the Left-Hegelians, like Stirner and Marx, Bakunin, of course, was steeped in the philosophy of Hegel. According to McLaughlin, and contrary to Carr, Bakunin however did not fully embrace Hegelian metaphysics, for he repudiated both Hegel's idealism and his form of dialectics. McLaughlin suggests that Bakunin's writings exemplify a revolutionary logic or negative dialects in which negation is seen as a creative force—implying as Bakunin put it, a 'sense of freedom', and as the one 'true expression of justice and love' (Lehning, 1973: p. 43). In his well-known article 'The Reaction in Germany', published anonymously in 1842—the article Lehning suggests (1973: p. 11) created a sensation in revolutionary circles in Germany—Bakunin offers a critique of what he calls the 'reactionary party'. Bakunin himself advocates 'democracy', which for the anarchist entailed an opposition to government, and the total transformation of the socio-economic and political order, to herald 'an original, new life which has not yet existed in history' (1973: p. 39). The reactionaries for Bakunin belonged to two types: the Consistent reactionaries (or conservatives) who stood for the complete suppression of the negative (the suppression, that is, of those like Bakunin who stood for democracy and the complete negation of the existing conditions), and Compromising reactionaries (or liberals) who attempted some sort of compromise or reconciliation between the positive (existing capitalism and government) and the negative—that is, democracy or the revolutionary critique. Discussing this article at some length, McLaughlin notes that Bakunin, using Hegelian terminology, is essentially concerned with exploring the contradiction between the reactionary principle—the positive thesis of unfreedom—and its antithesis—the negative principle of freedom. But for Bakunin, McLaughlin argues, the dialectical process is not viewed as sublation, or as a positive dialectic (as with Hegel, Marx and Comte), still less as a 'synthesis', but rather negation in itself is seen as an affirmative or creative principle—expressed as the principle of freedom or democracy. Contradiction for Bakunin thus represents not a mediation nor an equilibrium but the 'preponderance of the negative' (1973: p. 49). In Bakunin's version of the dialectic there is no synthesis, for the negative itself is seen as an 'affirmative, creative principle', one that would engender a 'new, affirmative and organic reality'. Thus the slogans of the French revolution, *liberté, egalité fraternité,* were understood by Bakunin as implying the complete negation of the political and social world of the nineteenth century. This article concludes with the famous words, 'The passion for destruction is a creative passion, too' (1973: p. 58). These words, McLaughlin argues, have been seriously misunderstood, for they did not imply mindless destruction, nor even nihilism, but rather Bakunin's negative logic, which implied the affirmation of freedom and the democratic order (p. 30). Negation for Bakunin is thus an affirmation not a mediation or sublation—an affirmation of creativity and freedom. McLaughlin thus repudiates entirely Kelly's attempt to foist upon Bakunin a triadic conception of history, which implied a 'fall' from some mythical golden age of primitive harmony, and the eventual restoration of this harmony

in some vision of a utopian society. For Bakunin expressed no nostalgia for some primitive gold age, and any speculations regarding some futuristic society Bakunin regarded as reactionary (p55). As Bakunin expressed it in *Statism and Anarchy*: 'Even the most rational and profound science cannot divine the form social life will take in the future. It can determine only the negative conditions, which follow logically from a rigorous critique of existing society' (1990: p. 198).

McLaughlin thus regards Kelly's attempt to portray Bakunin as a utopian thinker as quite 'absurd'.

Bakunin's Naturalism

The second part of McLaughlin's book gives a very good outline of Bakunin's evolutionary naturalism as well as of Bakunin's theory of religion, for in an important sense Bakunin's naturalism is very much bound up with his critique of 'theologism'—which embraces both religious ideologies and philosophical idealism. In Bakunin's philosophy, nature—understood as universal causality—and reality are synonymous; Bakunin making a distinction between the natural world (as actualised) and nature as universal, causality, that is, the possibilities inherent or imminent in the natural, material world (p105). Materialism and naturalism, for McLaughlin, essentially have the same meaning, and he emphasises that for Bakunin nature is dynamic, with 'movement of its own' (p. 107). Influenced by Diderot, Feuerbach, Comte and Darwin, Bakunin's dialectical or evolutionary naturalism thus repudiates both theologism (idealism) and mechanistic materialism. It is a philosophy that is characterised by the belief that 'life always precedes thought' and that objective or natural Being is always ontologically prior to human subjectivity; and that from an epistemological standpoint dialectical thinking precedes philosophical or theological speculation (p. 33). In contrast metaphysics, or what McLaughlin calls anthropocentrism, articulates the belief that thought and human subjectivity precede life and the objective natural world. Noting that Kantian metaphysics is radically opposed to naturalistic philosophy in its anthropocentrism, and given the subjectivist reactions of Kierkegaard, Stirner and the neo-Kantians against post-Hegelian philosophy, McLaughlin notes that much contemporary philosophy (whether Nietzschean, phenomenological, structuralist, post-structuralist, pragmatist or post-marxist), besides being scholastic and obscurantist, is 'absolutely antithetical to the naturalist tradition' to which Bakunin belongs. In spite of their radical pretences, much contemporary philosophy, McLaughlin affirms, is both philosophically and politically reactionary (p. 68). Even Marx, McLaughlin argues, given his undue emphasis on social mediation, is essentially closer to Kant than Hegel and thus there is a Kantian strand in his materialism (p. 16).

Given the close association between Bakunin's naturalism and his atheism McLaughlin devotes a great deal of discussion to Bakunin's theory of religion, as well as to Feuerbach's philosophy. Indeed, Feuerbach's critique of theology and speculative philosophy had an important influence on Bakunin. Although religious consciousness may have been important in the development of human

culture and in the affirmation of humanity, Bakunin was highly critical of the religion of his day, particularly Christianity, and for two reasons. Firstly, it is hostile to science and entails the abdication of human reason: and secondly, it involves the negation of human liberty (p141), particularly in having a symbiotic relationship with political power. The latter is expressed in the oppression and the exploitation of the mass of people by various functionaries—priests, monarchs, gendarmes, capitalists, entrepreneurs and politicians of every shade (p. 148). Thus although Bakunin follows Hegel in viewing religion or the 'divine idea' as the product of human consciousness, he also emphasises the inadequacy of religion as a form of reason, and the need for human consciousness to develop beyond religion in order to realise itself (p. 160).

Reason, the ability of humans to create the faculty by which humans achieve the consciousness of freedom (which is how Bakunin understood the rational faculty)—and the 'spirit of revolt' are the two essential aspects, for Bakunin, of human nature (p. 127). It should be noted that although Bakunin is better known for his critique of theologism and statism, he also opposed deterministic 'scientism', and was particularly hostile to the rule of scientific savants. Charges that Bakunin embraced the 'myth of progress' should therefore be regarded with some caution.

Making an interesting comparison between the philosophies of Marx and Bakunin, McLaughlin emphasises that Bakunin was always critical of the economic determinism that was inherent in Marx's materialist conception of history, and that Bakunin put much more stress than did Marx on the biological aspects of human life. Puzzled on how Marx 'can assert that nature is prior to that by which it is essentially mediated', McLaughlin interprets Marx as a Kantian idealist rather than a 'genuine' materialist (p. 170). But of course Marx was affirming, like later anthropologists, that nature is ontologically prior to humans, though our knowledge of the world is always socially mediated.

In my earlier study I suggested that Bakunin's philosophical writings on nature presented, in embryonic form, an ecological approach to the world, one that is materialist and historical, and stresses the continuity and organic link between humans and nature (Morris, 1993: p. 84). The ecological world view is implicit in the philosophy of Feuerbach, who wrote:

> Man is dependent on nature.... he should live in harmony with nature... even in his highest intellectual development he should not forget that he is a part and child of nature, but at all times honour nature and hold it sacred, not only as the ground and source of his existence, but also as the ground and source of his mental and physical well-being. (p. 199)

For Feuerbach this did not imply a religious perspective or the deification of nature. Yet although Bakunin follows Feuerbach in his naturalism, and is not, unlike Kant and Marx, an anthropocentric thinker, McLaughlin does suggest that there is an anti-ecological strain in Bakunin's thought, when, for instance,

he writes that humans can and should conquer and master nature (p. 231). But it is also important to recognise that Bakunin was influenced—like Kropotkin—by Darwin's evolutionary biology, and thus conceived of nature as a kind of evolutionary process, which ought not to be equated with the myth of progress. Thus human sociality and consciousness is seen by Bakunin as a natural development, and he denied any dualism between humans and nature, which was intrinsic to Cartesian mechanistic philosophy (Morris 1993: p. 79). What of course was significant about Darwin's evolutionary philosophy is that it introduced and emphasised the crucial importance of openness, chance, creativity, and the subjective agency and individuality of all organisms in the evolutionary process. Surprisingly, McLaughlin has little discussion of Darwin or evolutionary theory.

What is perplexing and frustrating about McLaughlin's study is that it contains some fifty pages of footnotes, many of which suggest valuable discussion in their own right and could have formed another chapter. These topics include: a critique of Marx's notion of a state 'administered' society, which Bakunin presciently saw as leading to despotism (p. 80); and Bakunin's 'federalist principle', which implied that the organisation of social life was from below. Also of interest was McLaughlin's denial that Bakunin was an anarcho-syndicalist and the discussion regarding Bakunin's constant advocacy of true communism which implied the unity of freedom and equality.

As McLaughlin denoted, liberal critics like Berlin and Pyziur denigrate Bakunin's socialism, while Marxists repudiate the libertarian aspects of Bakunin's political philosophy: in essence, of course, Bakunin was a libertarian socialist.

For McLaughlin, Bakunin was an heir to some of the radical aspects of the Enlightenment tradition—stemming from Spinoza and Diderot—which suggests that through secular reason and empirical knowledge (and struggle) humans could create a better world—one in which liberty, equality and fraternity could be fully manifested. Like his radical contemporaries Marx and Kropotkin, Bakunin was unduly optimistic regarding the coming revolution—but to blame 'reason' for the ills of the twentieth century seems to me to be completely facile. Equally, to describe Bakunin as a 'modernist' is also rather inept, for Bakunin repudiated many of the key aspects of so-called 'modernity'—specifically the modern nation state, industrial capitalism, possessive individualism and liberal ideology more generally.

No social anarchist, as far as I am aware, certainly not McLaughlin, treats Bakunin's writings as 'holy writ' or with uncritical adulation, for they have long acknowledged that Bakunin's anarchism is complex and full of contradictions. Most have approached Bakunin with an attitude of critical sympathy, recognising that for all his faults and foibles, he was the first to articulate, through his disputes with Marx, social anarchism as a political philosophy. Thus rather than viewing Bakunin as a misguided romantic bent on violence, or as having an unbalanced mind, he has been described—by, for example, Peter Marshall—as a

man whose search for wholeness was a 'bold and inspiring attempt to reclaim one's humanity in an alienated world' (1992: p. 308). McLaughlin, likewise, emphasises the contemporary relevance and critical significance of Bakunin—both with regard to his dialectical naturalism as a philosophy, and his social anarchism as a political vision.

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■ EARTH DEMOCRACY

Originally published in *Freedom* (2006)

In a recent "Beginner's Guide" to anarchism Ruth Kinna describes Ayn Rand as if she was an anarchist. An "Aynarchist" if you please. Ayn Rand, of course, as I long ago indicated in my *Ecology and Anarchism*, was by no stretch of the imagination an anarchist. For Rand, the guru of Margaret Thatcher, was an abrasive and outspoken radical of free market capitalism, a staunch defender of private property, and an advocate of the so-called "minimal" state—that is, a coercive state that lacks any welfare functions but upholds the free market and supports the rampages of corporate capitalism. Rand was also a technological freak, who waxed lyrical about skyscrapers, and completely lacked any ecological sensibility.

If anyone thinks capitalism is a good thing and warms to the likes of Ayn Rand and Murray Rothbard (as does Kinna), I suggest you read Vandana Shiva's recent book called *Earth Democracy* (Zed Books, 2006), for it offers a succinct, readable and highly engaging critique of both representative democracy and what she describes as corporate globalization, otherwise known as capitalism.

Capitalism, of course, has always been a global economic system, at least since the seventeenth century. And as Kropotkin long ago taught us, there has always been an unholy alliance between the modern state and capitalism.

A well-known eco-feminist and environmental activist Vandana Shiva interprets the current rampages of global capitalism as involving the continuing "enclosure of the commons". Whereas the first enclosures involved the appropriation and privatization of land and forests—she forgets the importance of slavery in the development of capitalism—the expansion of capitalism since the Second World War has taken other forms of "enclosures". These include the privatisation of water; the establishment of intellectual property rights and patents by the World Trade Organization—thus giving corporations exclusive control over seeds and other forms of organic life; and the expansion of industrial agriculture and agribusiness, thereby not only undermining subsistence farming and peasant livelihoods but leading to the control by corporations of all aspects of food production. The main outcome of the expansion of global capitalism and these "enclosures" has been—and these are lucidly described by Shiva—poverty and increasing social inequalities throughout the world, the degradation of the natural environment and the destruction of wildlife and viable ecosystems, the undermining of local communities and subsistence economies, cycles of violence, and, as a reaction, as it were, to the global economy, an upsurge in religious fundamentalism, or what Siva describes as "negative identities". Under global capitalism everything is being turned into a commodity, the whole biosphere privatized, and greed, plunder and profits have become the mainsprings of economic life under capitalism. Representative democracy has aided and abetted, Shiva argues, the machinations of global capitalism. She seems to think that this is something of a new phenomena, whereas, as Kropotkin argued, there has

always been a symbiotic relationship between the modern nation state and capitalism. Indeed, the expansion of the global economy is a political project.

The book *Earth Democracy* is focussed mainly on the Indian subcontinent, and Gandhi's legacy, Shiva tells us, is humanity's best hope for the future. She therefore gives interesting accounts of how peasant communities and subsistence farmers throughout India have resisted and challenged the "enclosures" and the "biopiracy" of the multinational corporations—emphasizing especially the important role that women play as the "guardians" of what she describes as the "living economies" of India. She also offers an important defence of organic farming—stressing the inefficiency, and the adverse social and ecological costs of industrial agriculture. The book is certainly no paean to eco-primitivism.

As an alternative to corporate globalization, Vandana Shiva outlines a project that owes much to Gandhi, and which she describes as "earth democracy". It entails the following: an advocacy of decentralization and the local democracy; a concern for peace and social justice; the sustaining of ecosystems and eco-communities based on the principles of diversity, reciprocity and self-organization; and the development of an ecological sensibility that respects the integrity and the intrinsic worth of all life forms, human and non-human. This of course is what anarchists have been advocating and struggling for, ever since Reclus and Kropotkin at the end of the nineteenth century. Yet apart from a brief note on Kropotkin with regard to mutual aid, Shiva makes no mention at all of anarchism. Her main inspiration is Gandhi, who, of course, inspired by Tolstoy, always looked upon himself as a kind of anarchist. But Shiva still has a hankering for some benign kind of spiritualism, and is still under the illusion that we can "reclaim" or "re-invent" the nation state. She envisions a state that would serve only the interests of ordinary people, and would curb and regulate the maraudings of global capitalism. What an illusion. She also mentions Ayn Rand—but only as an advocate of "cowboy capitalism" which tends to reduce social life to individuals. But overall *Earth Democracy* is a useful, informative and engaging book, much closer to the anarchist tradition than the politics of Ayn Rand. But what I found rather strange, given the fact that Shiva has been acclaimed as one of India's leading nuclear physicists, is that she makes no mention at all of nuclear weapons. Yet Indian politics over the last decade or so has witnessed the emergence of a nuclear state that has supported with enthusiasm free market capitalism, as well embracing a virulent Hindu nationalism along with mother goddess spirituality. On the Indian nuclear state Shiva is silent. Gandhi, of course, would be turning in his grave.

■ THE POLITICS OF THE ANARCHIST FEDERATION

Organise! (2006)

In an important academic study of contemporary anarchism Karen Goaman (2002) focussed exclusively on avant-garde individualists and anarcho primitivists. She implied, quite misleadingly, that these "currents" represented contemporary anarchism, and were, moreover, the only ones that engaged in radical "activism". What was interesting about her study was that she emphasized the importance of anarchist periodicals, for they created a sense of community, and, by drawing on past traditions, re-kindled and kept alive an alternative vision of social life. Unfortunately, by focussing exclusively on anarcho –primitivism and the avant-garde (falsely equated with anarchism) Goaman neglected to mention those anarchist groups focussed around such important periodicals as *Direct Action*, *Black Flag*, *Class War*, *Red and Black Revolution*, *Rebel Worker* and *Freedom*. Even more striking, given her emphasis on the Situationists and the avant-garde (the focus of her thesis) she completely fails to mention the Anarchist Federation. Yet over the last two decades the Anarchist (Communist) Federation has been actively engaged in contemporary struggles—whether relating to struggles around the workplace or community, environmental issues or the anti-capitalist movement—as well as regularly producing a splendid anarchist magazine Organise! and several important pamphlets.

As the Anarchist Federation is this year celebrating its 20th anniversary it might be useful here to offer my own reflections on this periodical appropriately titled with the active verb "*Organise!*"—for revolutionary anarchism.

Although the magazine openly advocates a specific form or strand of anarchism, that of anarchist communism and revolutionary class struggle, what I think is quite refreshing about *Organise!* is that it has always been free of sectarian angst and vituperation. Thus while engaging in constructive debates and critiques of other forms of anarchism, it has been singularly free of the personal invective and abuse that mars other anarchist periodicals, especially in the United States. Aiming not only to develop anarchist ideas, but to offer a clear anarchist viewpoint on contemporary issues and debates, what is also significant about *Organise!* is the truly broad coverage that it has always offered to its readership. Thus over the last decade or so *Organise!* has offered critical reflections on many different issues and struggles, both at a local level and in relation to the British state. It has then kept us informed about worker's struggles in Britain, and has offered enlightening reflections on such issues as the Criminal Justice Bill, advertising—"the poetry of capitalism", on racism in Tower Hamlets, and on the relation of squatters and travellers to the economic crisis. But what has always appealed to me about the magazine is that, within its twenty or so pages, it has invariably carried one or more articles on resistance movements or class struggles in other parts of the world.

Organise! has therefore always offered its readers an internationalist perspective, in reporting on the world-wide impact of global capitalism. Thus there

have been informative articles on, for example, worker's struggles in Japan, the resistance of native peoples in the Philippines and elsewhere to the intrusion of mining corporations, the terror in East Timor, class war in Argentina, and on many issues relating to the politics of such countries as Cuba, China, Somali, Mexico and South Africa.

Yet although *Organise!* has been centrally concerned with the class struggles at home and abroad, it has never neglected other important fields of struggle, particularly those relating to gender, the environment, and wider cultural issues. Reading some anarchists' texts and periodicals one might be forgiven for assuming that the anarchist movement only involves men, either academics or macho types. What then has been important about *Organise!* is that it has always been involved in gender issues. It has often focussed on women anarchists like Ito Noe, or on issues, such as abortion, that specifically concern women. Informative articles on anarchism and sex, on women and the Spanish Revolution, and on pornography and the sex industry have expressed this interest in gender issues. With regard to ecology *Organise!* has always taken a balanced approach. On the one hand we have anarchist periodicals like "Anarchy" and "Green Anarchist" which embrace primitivism with a fundamentalist ardour, and completely ignore class struggles, workers and urban problems, while on the other hand many anarchist journals and newspapers have tended to treat ecology as of marginal interest. In contrast *Organise!* has always treated the ecological crisis and environmental issues as important topics, while at the same time supporting class struggles. Social justice and defending environment are, for the Anarchist Federation, intrinsically linked. Thus *Organise!* has always supported environmental campaigns, whether in relation to Twyford Down or in supporting the London Greenpeace activists against the McDonald corporation. Equally important is that over the past decade it has provided useful critiques of primitivism and deep ecology as well as illuminating discussions of such issues as the politics of water, deforestation, nature conservation (anti-people or anti-capitalism?), public transport and land ownership. The pamphlet *Ecology and Class: Where There's Brass, There's Muck* draws together many of these earlier articles, and gives a very useful introduction to ecological issues, viewed from an anarchist communist perspective. The pamphlet is informative, well-researched and lucid, and covers a wide range of topics from biotechnology and global warming to primitivism and the anti-roads movement.

Equally important, though having a central focus on class struggles, and critical of the kind of scholasticism that is all too common in Academia, articles in *Organise!* often deal specifically with theoretical debates and wider cultural issues. Thus over the decade there have been articles on Keynesian economics, intellectual property rights, the politics of the Socialist Worker's Party, Malcolm X and Black nationalism, mutual aid and evolution, cultural identity, moral panics and children and god and religion.

In retrospect, it is of interest to read the early articles on Tony Blair and Saddam Hussein. These show a good deal of prescience. The article on Blair

entitled "Labour Pains" (1995) reflects on Blair's pamphlet on "Socialism" (no less), indicating how wishy-washy it is, and how Blair's politics are akin to those of Thatcher. How true!

Finally, there are the aspects of the magazine *Organise!* that have always appealed to me—the political cartoons, the support for anarchist prisoners, the obituaries and biographical vignettes of revolutionary anarchists, some known, some unknown, and the book reviews. Though often critical, such reviews express a generous spirit. There is also, usually, an engaging letters page.

Unlike some pretentious anarcho-primitivists the Anarchist Federation has always sought to critically develop anarchist communist ideas. So it has never seen the need to ridicule and dismiss the ideas of an earlier generation of anarchists as "obsolete". It has therefore drawn insightfully on the life and work of such social anarchists as Bakunin, Kropotkin, Makhno and Durruti.

Asked to respond to what the Anarchist Federation has done over the past decade or so, especially in relation to its magazine, one can only say that *Organise!* has been a beacon of light in a troubled world. Long may it prosper.

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■ ISLAM AND ANARCHISM

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Some years ago in the pages of *Freedom, l*ong before the religion of Islam became a political issue, I wrote a short note on the "Anarchists of Islam". I mentioned the fact that although politics and religion are intrinsically connected in Islam, there is a tradition of "rebel Islam", and that one particular sect, the Kharijites, were essentially anarchists believing that "power belongs only to God". There is also a saying of the prophet which suggests that the nearer one is to government the further you are from God. Yet in a recent issue of *Freedom,* "Class War" stridently proclaimed that it is "proud" to be described as Islamophobic—expressing its Opposition not only to Islam but to all forms of religious expression. The term Islamophobia, it is worth nothing, was first used by Islamic fundamentalists in Iran to describe Muslim women who refused to wear the veil. There are then many forms of Islam, as there are many kinds of anarchism.

Anarchism as a political tradition has always held an ambivalent relationship towards religion, mainly because anarchists have long recognized—long before Paul Chambers—that religious ideas and practices may not only bolster state power and sustain systems of exploitation (as well as being institutions of oppression in themselves, witness the Catholic Church) but also in certain contexts may serve as religions of revolt. Anarchists have therefore long embraced the dissenting traditions within Christianity, and have paid homage to the likes of Gerrard Winstanley, William Blake and Tom Paine. Indeed, many anarchists have themselves adopted a religious metaphysic. Mention may be made of Leo Tolstoy, Nicolas Berdyaev, Aurobindo Bose (described in my *Ecology and Anarchism*) Dorothy Day and Mohandas Gandhi.

It is in this context that the current issue of *Anarchist Studies* (14/1) is of particular interest, for it brings to the fore the divergent attitudes that anarchists have expressed towards religion, and it explores, in particular, the relationship of anarchism towards Islam. The issue is focussed around a seminal paper written by its editor, Sharif Gemie. Entitled "The Trial of Fatima: Anarchists, Muslims, and the Monde Libertaire 2003-2005", the paper presents a critique of the ideas and attitudes expressed in the columns of Monde Libertaire. This is the weekly periodical of the Federation Anarchiste based in Paris. Evidently during the period 2003-2005 many articles in the periodical expressed an extreme hostility towards Islam, as well as supporting the French state in its legal prohibition of the wearing of headscarves by young Muslim women in French schools. Sharif Gemie points out that this prohibition is intrinsically linked to the French notion of *Laicete*, the ideal of a secular public sphere free of religious influence. In fact, he notes that among anarchists, a particularly militant strand of anti-clericalism developed in France, directed against the influence of the Catholic Church on schooling, and its frequent support for right-wing political causes. What troubled Gemie was that in a context in which the hegemony of the American empire was being justified through the use of anti-Islamic slogans,

and the far-right were exploiting anti-Muslim sentiments, it was despairing to see anarchists expressing support for state repression. The universalism of the Enlightenment, to which the French anarchists continually appealed, had little to do with promoting human values or cross-cultural understanding, Gemie suggests; it only expressed a narrow, nationalistic, bunkered form of French particularism. It thus had more to do with identity politics than the radical universalism of the Enlightenment.

The remainder of the issue of *Anarchist Studies* is devoted to a number of discussion papers, all of which offer thoughtful reflections and observations on Sharif Gemie's critique of the French anarchists associated with Monde Libertaire. Only one of these contributors, Ronald Creagh, offers support for the French anarchists, emphasizing that in Islam no distinction is made between religion and culture, and stressing that the Union of French Islamic Organizations is indeed a fundamentalist organization. Sharif Gemie mentions this Union in his paper, denies that it is fundamentalist, even questioning the validity of the label used. A fundamentalist, I always thought, is someone who imposes on others their own religious dogma and moral edicts by means of state power or other forms of coercive violence (see *The Raven* 27 (1994) for some interesting and informative discussion of fundamentalism). By this criteria the Union of French Islamic Organizations is indeed fundamentalist, declaring that the "Quran is our constitution". Also affirming that this organization is fundamentalist, George Ubbiali, who contends that any progressive form of politics must challenge such reactionary organizations. It is not a question, he writes, of denouncing Islam, but of repudiating all those currents within Islam which are incompatible with the progressive ideals of anarchism.

Many of the contributors emphasize that Islam is not a monolithic system, and like all religions takes many different forms. Thus, as both Paul Chambers and Beltran Roca stress, religion in certain historical contexts, and this applies equally to Islam, can be interpreted as a progressive force. This is hardly news. Anthropologists and Marxists have been stressing this for generations, emphasizing that religion may be an oppressive force upholding systems of power, as well as being a catalyst for revolt (see my book *Religion and Anthropology*, 2006).

Harold Barclay, who has conducted anthropological research in Egypt, while acknowledging that Islam has traditionally been associated with authoritarian structures, notes in his response that the religion itself is highly decentralized, and regrets the tendency of some anarchists to view all things Muslim as intrinsically evil. Support for the state regulation of dress by some French anarchists, Barclay writes, is clearly contrary to anarchist theory and practice. But Barclay firmly denies that he is an "apologist for Islam".

But in emphasizing the "polyvalence" of religion, and the fact that Islam contains, as he puts it, "a multiplicity of libratory elements", Beltran Roca almost ends up denying the reactionary aspects of radical Islam. Even though, throughout its history, Islam has always formed a symbiotic relationship with the state. Religion, Roca informs us, is not the "opium of the people". Yet again,

throughout history religion, including Islam, has been largely an oppressive institution, supporting state power and all forms of authority and exploitation. There never was a tyrant who did not appeal to religion in some form to justify his position. Roca also has the quaint idea, that until Foucault came upon the scene, anarchists recognized only coercive power. This represents a complete misunderstanding of the anarchist tradition, as I tried to show in my book on Kropotkin, which has a long discussion of Foucault (*Kropotkin: The Politics of Community* 2004). It is also worth pointing out that when Foucault described power as "productive" he was not referring to something benign and creative, but to forms of power exercised by the modern state and industrial capitalism—biopower, surveillance, discipline, governmentality, pastoral power. This is the reason why, long before Foucault, anarchists were critiquing the "productive" modality of power called religion. What is important however, about Roca's contribution is that although he makes some rather derogatory remarks about anarchism and the Enlightenment (following the academic fashion!), in fact—contradicting himself—he pleads that we must defend the values of the Enlightenment: liberty, equality and fraternity. Equally important, while emphasizing the importance of upholding cultural diversity—as does L. Susan Brown—Roca also stresses that cultural relativism if taken to extremes, can degenerate into a dangerous, reactionary force. Indeed, in spite of all the rhetoric about "difference" and cultural "identity", and the continual denigration of the Enlightenment and universal values, one has to acknowledge that identity politics and the emphasis on "difference" has its dark side. This is manifested in fascism, racism, nationalism, ethnic violence and, of course, religious fundamentalism. It has always troubled me to see anarchists joining the ranks of De Maistre, Hitler and Mussolini in denouncing the radical values of the Enlightenment tradition.

What is troubling then, about the current issue of *Anarchist Studies*, is that although it makes great play on the positive role of "diversity" and the progressive aspects of religion, specifically Islam, it completely underplays the reactionary and oppressive nature of religion. Yet in the 21st Century religion is only rarely linked with radical politics; it is mainly linked with bigotry, intolerance and support for oppressive regimes and reactionary and authoritarian politics. For example, in Sri Lanka Buddhism has become closely identified with the state and with Sinhalese nationalism, leading scholars like Tambiah to write about the "betrayal" of Buddhism, for like anarchism, Buddhism has always expressed universal human values. Bush's regime in the United States, the most powerful state in the world, is bolstered and kept in power by a bigoted and powerful fundamentalist Christian lobby. This lobby is anti-feminism, anti-homosexuals, anti-ecology and anti-Darwin. Bush, like Blair, claims to have a hot line to God. Likewise, in India a militant and violent form of religious ideology, Hindutya, has been in the resurgence, a form of Hindu nationalism intrinsically linked to a nuclear state and the advocacy of free-market capitalism. And, finally, of course, in Islamic states like Saudi Arabia and Iran, whatever their doctrinal

differences, a fundamentalist form of Islam is currently practised. Now widespread, especially in Africa, and supported by these states, a radical form of Islam is now afoot, one that envisages an Islamic state (a theocracy) and the implementation of Sharia law. Such a law sanctions by divine edict the murder of apostates (Muslims who reject their faith), the stoning or flogging of adulterous women, the persecution of homosexuals and any writers or artists who dare to criticize Islam; Muslim clerics are free to denounce secularism but woe betide anyone criticizing Islam. We are in fact seeing throughout the world an unholy alliance (if I may be allowed such an expression) between religion and both capitalism and authoritarian politics. These are the "sombre trinity" of which Flores Magon wrote—state, capital and religion.

Anarchism has always championed both universalism, the importance of human values, and cultural diversity. In defending Muslim women against state repression and expressing solidarity with the oppressed, anarchists should not go to the other extreme and become apologists for religion. Still less, as Paul Chambers implies, should they become a "cheerleader" for the faith. Supporting individual Muslims in their struggles does not imply that we should adopt a religious metaphysic, nor that we should kow-tow, like the Socialist Workers Party, to radical Muslim clerics. We should repudiate both God (religion) and Mammon (capitalism).

■ POSTSTRUCTURALIST ANARCHISM

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There has been much talk these days, mostly among academics, of so-called poststructuralist anarchism. It constitutes, we are informed, a "new wave" of anarchism which has completely rendered "obsolete" earlier forms of anarchism. Earlier class struggle anarchists are thus dismissed as having focussed only on coercive state power, ignoring other forms of oppression; as having as "essentialist" ie a narrow or fixed, conception of human subjectivity; and as having been concerned with "being" not "becoming". The quotes are from the pen of John Moore. Described as an iconoclastic "thinker" Moore happily combined the advocacy of neo-primitivism, the aristocratic individualism of Stirner and Nietzsche, and cultural poetics as a form of insurrection. But the above depiction of an earlier generation of anarchists is of course a complete misrepresentation of their ideas, and is almost a caricature of revolutionary or social anarchism.

An extremely parochial concept, "poststructuralism" is mainly applied to the theories of a group of elitist intellectuals who belong to what Marshall Berman described as the "privileged French mandarin caste". The question is: can any of these so-called poststructuralists be fairly described as an "anarchist"? Let's go through them one by one.

PIERRE BOURDIEU. A fine sociologist Bourdieu was, I'm afraid, essentially an old-fashioned state socialist, and was even an avid supporter of a strong European state. This state, for Bourdieu, would curb the negative social impacts of a rampant neo-liberal capitalism. Though an anti-capitalist, Bourdieu was hardly an anarchist.

MICHEL FOUCAULT has indeed been escribed as a neo-anarchist, for he was centrally concerned with the various forms of power that ran alongside, complemented and supported coercive state power—forms he called biopower, disciplinary power, governmentality, pastoral power. But Foucault had such a totalizing conception of power that he tended to reduce all knowledge and all social relations to patterns of domination, and he had such an aversion towards the human subject that it is difficult to conceive, as John Zerzan stressed, how any resistance to power might emerge. Indeed, Foucault dismissed anarchists as being rather "infantile" in their hopes for a better world and in putting faith in human potential. He himself had a rather Hobbesian view of human nature and was essentially a religiously—inclined Nietzschean Marxist. It's hardly surprising then that Foucault had a fascination with Zen Buddhism and supported Ayatollah Khomeini and reactionary Islam clerics at the time of the Iranian revolution. He even excused their oppressive regime by implying that they had a different "regime of truth" to "our" own, thus denying the existence of any universal human values. You could defend fascism and chattel slavery on these grounds.

Both Todd May, who coined the phrase "poststructuralist anarchism", and Paul Tremlett (in the pages of *Freedom*) lauded the supposed radical politics of

JEAN-FRANCOIS LYOTARD. A disillusioned Marxist, it was Lyotard who defined postmodernism as a mood or perception that expressed an "incredulity" towards grand narratives. By which he essentially meant Marxism. This at a time when the ideology of "neo-liberalism" was being foisted upon the world by the agents of capitalism, and the grand narratives of religious fundamentalism were on the upsurge. Influenced by the reactionary philosophies of Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, Lyotard ended his days dreaming of inter-galactic travel and supporting the right-wing Giscard D'Estaing in the French presidential election. Hardly the actions of a committed anarchist?

Like both Foucault and Lyotard, JEAN BAUDRILLARD was also a disillusioned ex-Marxist. He eventually lost faith in any form of radical politics. Taking Marx's idea of "commodity fetishism" to an absolute and ridiculous extreme, he declared that any kind of revolutionary transformation of capitalist society was now impossible. Why? Because it is no longer possible to make any distinction between the hyperreality presented by the media and the real world. Production, he argued, no longer has any relevance—all is consumption (tell that to people working in the sweat shops of Asia) and we have to face the fact that there has been the "demise" of both semiotics and the material world. No kidding! The Gulf War, Baudrillard informed us in 1991 did not actually take place. Any thought about changing the world is therefore pure nostalgia and all we can do is to sit back and embrace capitalist consumerism hoping that one day it will implode. Such rank pessimism and nihilism and Baudrillard's semiological idealism is a long way from anarchism. He died recently, and in response to an effusive obituary I wrote to the Times Higher enquiring whether Baudrillard was a real person or just a part of the hyperreality, he theorized!

JACQUES DERRIDA has also been interpreted as a linguistic idealist, in famously declaring that there is "nothing beyond the text", although he was later to plead he had been completely "misunderstood". Such pleading, of course, completely undermines his own theory that words have no stable meaning and truth is not one of correspondence! Derrida's earlier writings were criticized by me—and many others—as being completely divorced from politics and Todd May admitted that Derrida did not have any clearly articulated political philosophy. Derrida responded to these criticisms by producing the esoteric text *Spectres of Marx* which essentially aimed to demonstrate his concern for social justice and that his own theory of "deconstruction" was really a form or update of Marxism. Devoid of course of any class analysis and completely ignoring Bakunin's critique of Marx's authoritarian politics. Is Derrida an anarchist? Hardly. He's essentially a radical liberal democrat, though a worthy one.

An admiring fan of Derrida, the neo-pragmatist RICHARD RORTY has also been described as a poststructuralist philosopher. But he's hardly an anarchist. By his own admission he's a literary dilettante, absurdly proclaiming the end of philosophy, and is an outspoken supporter of the American empire.

Of all the poststructuralists GILLES DELEUZE is perhaps the closest to anarchist thought. Along with Foucault (they formed a mutual admiration society,

promoting each other's work) he is the key figure in Todd May's book on *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism*. Yet interestingly Paul Patton's book on Deleuze's politics has no discussion of anarchism at all, either as a social movement or as a political tradition. Patton does however stress that Deleuze is not a "romantic anarchist", in that he does not hold that humans have an essential benign nature or that power is simply repressive—notions which Patton misleadingly and ignorantly foists upon so-called "classical" anarchism. What Deleuze does, of course (which is typical of some academics) is to appropriate—filch—many anarchist ideas, specifically the anarchist critiques of the state, capitalism, representation, the vanguard party (Marxism), without any acknowledgement, and wrap these ideas up in the most scholastic and esoteric jargon—writings that are virtually incomprehensible to ordinary mortals. Even the well-known philosopher Mario Bunge, himself a radical democrat, admitted that he could not make sense of Deleuze's arcane prose. It is significant that Deleuze's most political work *A Thousand Plateaus* (co-authored with another radical democrat Felix Guattari) makes no mention at all of anarchism. There is thus no mention, let alone any engagement, with the writings of (for example) Proudhon, Reclus, Kropotkin, Goldman, Rocker, Landauer, Bookchin, nor any discussion of anarchism as a political movement actively engaged in struggles for a better world.

Gilles Deleuze, though a materialist, is an old fashioned metaphysical philosopher whose ideas, like those of Hegel and Heidegger, are expressed in the most obscure and mystifying jargon, which indicate a very mechanistic—machinic—mind set. Radical social movements that oppose state power are thus "war machines", social groups are "social machines", systems of ideas are "abstract machines", and humans as organic beings are reduced to assemblages of "desiring machines". Capitalism is also a "desiring machine". Deleuze's politics, though difficult to define, is rather despairing: it attempts to oblate any form of human agency; offers little in the way of concrete proposals other than vague notions about "smooth space", "rhizomatics", "de-territorialization", "lines of flight" or aligning ourselves with some "nomadic war machine"; and Deleuze seems to insist that any kind of unity or organization inevitably entails hierarchy or a state form. As Peter Hallward concludes; for those who seek to change the world or empower its inhabitants Deleuze's esoteric and elitist philosophy has precious little to offer, even if one understands it. In fact, Hallward interprets Deleuze as a kind of contemplative mystic—just like Deleuze's own philosophical heroes Spinoza and Bergson, neither of whom were anarchists. Deleuze's other intellectual hero was Nietzsche who was of course, as Richard Wolin argues, not an anarchist at all but a proto-fascist.

One can but conclude that very few of the French poststructuralist mandarins can really be embraced as anarchists. But they do appeal to budding academic philosophers.

■ BAKUNIN: THE CREATIVE PASSION

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Mark Leier, (New York: St. Martins Press)

"Liberty without socialism is privilege and injustice, socialism without liberty is slavery and brutality" Bakunin (p 190).

As I intimated in an earlier review, more than a decade ago I was prompted, indeed provoked, into writing a little introduction to the life and work of Michael Bakunin. My motivation for doing so was that I was not only incensed by the harsh, derogatory and unfair criticisms of Bakunin produced by liberal and Marxist scholars—who dismissed Bakunin as an intellectual buffoon bent on nothing but violence and destruction—but by anarcho–primitivists and Nietzschean individualists who completely repudiated Bakunin's social anarchism. For such fundamentalists Bakunin was a "leftist" and not a real anarchist like themselves, and was thus best forgotten.

In his admirable study of Bakunin's philosophy, Paul McLoughlin has already done a great deal to restore Bakunin's intellectual integrity as a political thinker, underwriting his seminal importance in the development of social anarchism, as well as affirming that Bakunin is less of an historical curiosity than an anarchist whose ideas have a freshness and originality and a contemporary relevance which we would do well to examine and learn from. Complementing this work, we now have Mark Leier's biography of Bakunin—subtitled "The Creative Passion". It is an excellent biography of the real Bakunin, not the caricature invoked by the likes of Aileen Kelly, Isaiah Berlin, Hal Draper and Francis Wheen—a biography long overdue.

Well researched and full of good scholarship Leier's biography is written in an engaging style, a style that is informative, insightful and full of zest, as Leier relates the many incidents and events in Bakunin's colourful and fascinating life. It is thus extremely readable, free of the kind of scholastic jargon that one usually encounters among so-called postmodern anarchists. In fact, Leier's biography is a delight to read, and at times quite entertaining, although occasionally his quips jar a little, especially if, like me, you have little interest in pop culture, comic strips and the Jerry Springer show.

What is helpful about Leier's biography is that not only does it offer an absorbing account of Bakunin's life, writings and political activities, but that it also provides a lot of useful background material regarding the socio-historical context in which Bakunin lived and thought. There are, for example, extremely enlightening accounts of the following: Russian serfdom, the nature of capitalism as an economic system, the Paris Commune, and German idealist philosophy—in which Leier delightfully summarizes the metaphysical ideas of Fichte and Hegel; as well as wonderful vignettes of Bakunin's contemporaries—Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Wilhelm Weitling and Sergei Nechaev. Interestingly though

Bakunin's more immediate comrades, Carlo Cafiero, Errico Malatesta, James Guilaume and Elisee Reclus—all committed anarchist communists—get no more than a passing mention.

The main contours of Bakunin's turbulent life are perhaps well known, but Leier treats his subject with an unusual critical sympathy, giving a lucid and balanced account of key issues and events surrounding Bakunin's life as a revolutionary anarchist. There are thus poignant discussion, by no means uncritical, of Bakunin's relationship with his immediate family, as well as his young wife, Antonia; of Bakunin's penchant for secret societies; of the nature and context of his anti-Semitic outbursts; and of Bakunin's participation in the political insurrections in Dresden (1848) and Lyon (1870). Leier also gives a sympathetic and enlightening account of Bakunin's many years in prison (1849-1857)—two years of which were spent in solitary confinement in the infamous Peter and Paul Fortress. It was there that Bakunin penned his famous confession to the Tsar.

Throughout Leier's text there are also interesting insights into Bakunin's rather flamboyant personality; not for nothing did Richard Wagner and the Konigstein police describe him as a "colossal". By all accounts Bakunin had a warm, generous and outgoing personality, loved Beethoven's music, was seriously overweight, smoke and drank to excess, and unlike Marx was generally free of rancour, deceit and political intrigue. Leier affirms that Bakunin, given his generosity of spirit, had no ability as a political intriguer, despite his fondness for secret codes and imaginary organizations. He thus argues that there is absolutely no evidence at all that Bakunin ever wanted, or even tried, to take over or destroy the First International.

Besides providing us with a sensitive and poignant account of Bakunin's life and activities, as well as of the wider context, Leier's biography also gives succinct outlines of all Bakunin's major writings. These range from his early article "The Reaction in Germany" (1842), which had a tremendous impact on his avant-garde contemporaries, to his last work "Statism and Anarchy" (1873). The former article, on reactionary and reformist politics in Germany in the 1840's, ends with those famous words: "The passion for destruction is at the same time a creative passion". But as Leier makes clear this did not imply for Bakunin mindless violence or that he was prepared, like Attila and Robespierre, to "wade through seas of blood"—as Isaiah Berlin churlishly put it—but rather it indicated the negation of the present social order (the overcoming of capitalism and the modern state) and the creation of a decentralized society based on voluntary associations. Moreover, as Leier emphasizes, this for Bakunin did not imply some apocalyptic vision—which is how Bakunin still continues to be understood, or rather misunderstood. Leier thus offers a clear riposte to those self-proclaimed postanarchists, like Richard Daly, who, putting new labels on old wine bottles, follow Bakunin's liberal and Marxist detractors, in seeing Bakunin as lost in some millennial or apocalyptic vision. And certainly, though Bakunin was an advocate of direct action and propaganda by the deed, and had sympathy

for Russian brigands, he was never an advocate of assassinations, revolutionary violence or terrorism (unlike the youthful Engels). As Bakunin clearly put it: "Liberty can only be created by liberty, by an insurrection of the people and the voluntary organization of the workers from below" (p.287). This entailed overcoming capitalism, and a complete break with all governments and bourgeois politics—a social revolution. As Leier writes: Bakunin "insisted that revolutionary violence was to be directed against institutions not people, and nowhere did he advocate terrorism or assassination" (p.208). In fact, Bakunin offered warnings against the harm caused by revolutionary violence, and had nothing but contempt for Nechaev's revolutionary nihilism and Jocobin politics. Bakunin's "passion for destruction" did not then entail a cult of violence but a call to build gradually a new world free of oppression and exploitation. Bakunin's anarchism thus implied a philosophy of freedom, morality and solidarity; and the aim of a social revolution was not to kill individuals but to destroy "property and the state" (p.199).

Running through the book, almost like a silver thread, at least for the last two hundred pages, is a discussion of the complex relationship between Karl Marx and Bakunin. Leier, to his credit, tries not to take sides, and seems to act as a kind of broker, intent on bringing together Marxism (authoritarian socialism) and anarchism (libertarian socialism)—or "collectivism" as Bakunin described his own brand of revolutionary or class struggle anarchism. Leier emphasizes that Marx and Bakunin had much in common besides their hirsute appearance; both came from privileged backgrounds and were radical democrats in their youth; both were philosophical realists and historical materialists; both were atheists, but sympathetic to the fact that religion often provided meaning, solace and consolation for the oppressed; both were committed members of the First International; both were essentially anti-capitalists—although Marx and Engels both sanctioned capitalist imperialism in relation to Morocco, India and the invasion of Mexico by the United States—Engels viewing such imperialism as in the interests of "civilization"; and, finally, both remained dedicated revolutionary socialists to the end of their days. All this, despite the animosity that developed between the two men and their political differences. For Bakunin was always critical of Marx's authoritarian politics.

Director of the Centre for Labour Studies at Simon Fraser University, and author of several books on labour history, Mark Leier is to be complemented for providing us with a readable and very useful biography of Bakunin. Indeed, Leier specifically offers an interpretation of Bakunin's life and ideas that can be used by anyone interested in anarchism and social change. For Bakunin's critique of capitalism and the state has lost none of its force, and that today, more than ever, Bakunin holds out a vision of a world of freedom, equality and fraternity against which the "present reality" of global capitalism may be measured and found wanting. Such are the concluding words of this insightful biography. The book is indeed a timely affirmation of class struggle anarchism. It is a pity therefore that the book is only referenced with "notes", and so there is no useable bibliography or even a listing of Bakunin's writings.

■ SACCO AND VANZETTI

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In Boston on 23rd August 1927, some eighty years ago, two revolutionary anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolemo Vanzetti were executed, having been wrongly convicted of an armed robbery and murder that took place at Baintree, Massachusetts in April 1920. A similar armed robbery had taken place some months earlier, but nobody was injured and the robbery was, in fact, a fiasco but witnesses identified the robbers as Italians. The trial of Sacco and Vanzetti in July 1921 was an absolute travesty of justice.

The judge was biased and unscrupulous and expressed a marked animosity towards the defendants; there was no evidence at all that the two men were at the scene of the crime, for both had substantial alibis. And neither man had previously been convicted of any crime. The trial had taken place against the background of the hysterical 'red scare' at the end of the First World War. Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman and Luigi Galleani had all been deported from the United States a few years earlier. What then led to the conviction of Sacco and Vanzetti? Apparently, the fact that they were Italian immigrants, had possessed guns at the time of their arrest and were militant atheists and anarchists.

The judge, as Paul Avrich wrote, played on the emotions and prejudices of the jurors to get the two men convicted.

Both men were Italians and were in their late thirties. Nicola 'Nick' Sacco worked in a shoe factory and was a skilled and reliable worker and was happily married with a family. He was a vital and energetic individual, who spoke little English; not an intellectual, he nevertheless threw himself body and soul into the anarchist cause. Bartolomeo Vanzetti, in contrast, was a bachelor. He worked as a fish vendor, selling fish in the Boston market. He was a lover of the outdoors and by nature rather philosophical, and as one of his friends recalled, anarchism personified. Always well groomed, Vanzetti sported a large moustache. Upton Sinclair described Vanzetti as "a quiet and gentle man with a wonderful dream of justice for the working class and peace on earth". But both men were revolutionary anarchists who preached insurrectionary violence, and were followers of the Italian anarchist Luigi Galleani (1861-1931). Publisher of the periodical *Cronoca Sovversiva* (Subversive chronicle), Galleani was one of the most powerful propagandists for anarchism, although Galleani hardly gets a mention in most histories and anthologies of anarchism, no doubt because of his advocacy of insurrectionary violence. But Galleani was one of the leading Italian anarchists in the United States in the early decades of the twentieth century, a great radical orator and a man with a magnetic and striking personality.

The miscarriage of justice with regard to Sacco and Vanzetti was so blatant and ghastly that while on death row many anarchists, radicals, and even liberals sprang to their defence. Their supporters including the philosophers John Dewey and Bertrand Russell, the socialist Eugene Debs—who visited them in Charleston state prison; Felix Frankfurter a professor of law at Harvard University, the

novelists Upton Sinclair and H.G. Wells, the French writer and Nobel prize laureate Anatole France, as well as the novelist John Dos Passos, who served on their defence committee and wrote a moving plea on behalf of the two anarchists, "Facing the chair".

On the day of their execution there were protests outside the prison, and demonstrations throughout the world. In Paris there was a general strike, and on the following day there were riots and protests in many European cities—including London—as well as a general strike in Buenos Aires.

This gross miscarriage of justice has become a part of American history—for the trial record clearly demonstrated that Sacco and Vanzetti were sentenced to death not because they were guilty of any crime but because they were immigrants and anarchists.

Indeed, the *cause célèbre* has an enduring significance for socialists and anarchists—at least those with a sense of history—partly because of the dignity with which Sacco and Vanzetti conducted themselves during their long ordeal, and partly because of the sentiments that they expressed in their last days. As Vanzetti said in one of his interviews: "If it had not been for this thing I might have lived out my life talking at street corners. I might have died unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph. Never in our full life can we hope to do such work for tolerance, for justice, for man's understanding of man, as now we do by accident.... The taking of our lives, lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish peddler—all! That last moment belongs to us. That agony is our triumph!"

Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti continue to be a symbol of justice against the might of state oppression, as Emma Goldman expressed it, and their spirit lives on.

■ THE POLITICS OF EMPIRE

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The British Empire, we are told, was the largest empire the world has ever seen, far greater than that of ancient Rome or Genghis Khan. At its zenith it covered around a quarter of the earth's land surface. It was an empire over which the sun never set. At the end of the nineteenth century the British Empire governed around 450 million people, then about a quarter of the world's population.

In the recent decade, particularly since the illegal occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq, it has become fashionable among historians, on television and in books, to portray the British Empire as a rather benign institution. Thus in his widely acclaimed book *How Britain Made the Modern World* (Penguin, 2003), Niall Ferguson informs us what was important and *distinctive* about the British Empire was that it did so much to promote democracy—representative government—and "the spread of liberty". Actually what especially appeals to Ferguson is the fact that the British Empire did so much to spread free market capitalism—the very antithesis of equality, liberty and fraternity, as well as of any form of real democracy. Although it is worth noting, of course, that democracy is now defined by the Bush intelligentsia as any political system that supports free market capitalism.

Ferguson's book *Empire* is a good read. Full of entertaining anecdotes relating to those "heroes" of the British Empire—Cecil Rhodes, Baden-Powell, Lord Curzon, and, of course, that racist ideologue of Empire, Winston Churchill, who more than anyone exemplified the imperialist hubris and the "arrogance of power". Yet besides the heroics and splendours of the Empire, which so appeals to Ferguson, and which he describes so graphically, there is the reality of oppression and exploitation. For what is so striking about the legacy of the British Empire and the "imperial achievement" was that it also involved a radical intolerance of other cultures (hence the promotion of Christianity and "civilization"), racism and the denigration of non-Europeans, and the exploitation of people throughout the Empire through slavery, share-cropping, indentured labour and wage labour. Such exploitation was maintained through colonial states that were anything but democratic, and which quickly suppressed any form of resistance to colonial rule with force and brutality. As Ferguson himself describes it: native peoples of the Empire were plundered, dispossessed of their land, robbed, taxed, even wiped out, and any resistance "mown down by the Maxim gun". No wonder Adolf Hitler was a fervent admirer of the British Empire. All this tends to be downplayed by Ferguson and his focus is not on the peoples of the Empire but on its rulers. What he likes about the British Empire was that not only did it promote and encourage, indeed impose, free market capitalism throughout the world, but it proved that "Empire" is a form of "international government" that can "work". Thus Ferguson has become the "drummer boy" of the American Empire, urging the United States to take up the "White Man's Burden". The United States under Bush, in the name of "liberty" and "democracy", is thus being encouraged (as if it needs any encouragement) to take up the

"global burden" and govern the world in the interests of everyone. Ferguson overlooks, of course, the exploitation and oppression of people throughout the world that such "governance" entails.

If you would like an "antidote" to Ferguson's thesis that the British Empire was a force on the side of goodness, truth and liberty, you can do no better than read John Newsinger's recent book *The Blood Never Dried* (Bookmarks, 2006). The book takes its title from the words of the Chartist and socialist Ernest Jones, who when told that the sun never sets on the British Empire, replied "and the blood never dried". For like William Morris—and, of course, anarchists like Kropotkin—Jones was a harsh critic of the British Empire.

Although subtitled "A People's History of the British Empire" Newsinger's book is not so much a history of this Empire as a celebration of people's resistance to it. It thus focuses on people's struggles and on the rebellions against the imposition of imperial rule. It is well researched, lucidly written, and written from a Marxist perspective. Chapter by chapter, it goes through a series of historical episodes from the Jamaican rebellion of 1831 and the struggle against slavery, through to the current opposition to American imperialism, exemplified in the invasion and occupation of Iraq. It thus has interesting and informative chapters on, for example, the Irish famine, the Opium wars in China, the Indian "mutiny" of 1857-58, the invasions of Egypt and the Sudan in the late 19th century, through to the crushing of the Mau Mau revolt in Kenya in the 1950's. The well-known battle of Omdurman, portrayed in the film *The Four Feathers*, and in which Churchill famously took part, was thus completely one-sided. Some 16 thousand Sudanese "dervishers" were killed in the battle, while only forty-eight British soldiers lost their lives. Not only did the "heroes" of Empire have overwhelming firepower, but flogging, torture, imprisonment without trial, and the summary execution or hanging of rebels or dissidents were seemingly commonplace in attempts to crush rebellions against imperial rule—the Empire. During the Mau Mau revolt of the 1950s, for example, which was a revolutionary movement mainly among the Kikuyu, which aimed to overthrow colonial rule, torture and beatings were frequently used to extract confessions, over 70 thousand people were interned without trial, including many women and children, and over a thousand hanged as "rebels" against the British Empire.

The book ends with some interesting reflections on British foreign policy and its relation to the American Empire—supported, of course, with enthusiasm by Niall Ferguson. Newsinger indicates that since the Second World War the British Labour Party has always allied itself with the American Empire—as it had earlier supported the British Empire. Thus, Blair's willingness to subordinate himself to one of the most right-wing, reactionary and openly imperialist administrations in U.S. history, simply expresses a continuity with the policies of past Labour governments. What is new though is Blair's enthusiastic support for the neo-conservative agenda, namely, his open embrace of the interests of big business and the rich. Small wonder that Rupert Murdoch is now described as the patron saint of New Labour.

FLORES MAGÓN AND THE ANARCHIST VISION OF FREEDOM

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More than a decade ago, drawing on the important writings of David Poole on the anarchist tendencies within the Mexican Revolution (1), I wrote an article on the life and anarchist philosophy of Ricardo Flores Magon (2). It was an attempt to keep alive the memory of an important revolutionary anarchist, at a time when eco-primitivism and so-called poststructuralist anarchism (aka Nietzschean Marxism) were beginning of take centre stage in anarchist circles. For Flores Magon, along with his brother Enrique and Librado Rivera, was an important figure within the Mexican Liberal Party, and his writings and activities had a crucial impact on the course of the Mexican Revolution.

In the bookshops now is a splendid collection of Ricardo Flores Magon's writings (3), mostly compiled from the periodical Regeneracion. This periodical first appeared in 1900 as a law journal but later became a radical newspaper, openly espousing anarcho-communism, that is, revolutionary class struggle anarchism. Edited by Chaz Bufe and Mitchell Verter, "Dreams of Freedom" is offered as a "Ricardo Flores Magon Reader", and provides for English-speaking radicals, not only a comprehensive collection of Flores Magon's articles, which appeared in Regeneracion between 1900 and 1918, but also documents the various proclamations and manifestos of the Mexican Liberal Party. But unlike many Readers this anthology is blessed by an excellent and informative introduction to the historical background in Mexico, and to the life and struggles of Flores Magon. This introduction, written by Verter, takes up some eighty pages; it is thus substantive. It is also well-researched, engaging, and at times illuminating. The Reader also has a useful chronology of events relating to Mexican history and the Flores Magon's own biography, as well as an excellent and comprehensive bibliography.

A century later we may perhaps debate the validity and appropriateness of armed struggles against political tyranny and economic oppression. Even so, no one reading Flores Magon's forceful and often poetic writings can be other than inspired and moved by his passion for social justice, his revolutionary struggles for a better world, free of tyranny and exploitation, and by his lucid vision of anarchy. How different from the obscurantist musings of the poststructuralists, those academic mandarins who have appropriated many of the ideas of an earlier generation of anarchists, with little or no acknowledgement, whilst dismissing them in elitist fashion as naïve romantics. Unlike these poststructuralists, Flores Magon was concerned with the progress of humanity, with the importance of truth, and with the transformation of those "three beautiful words" (as Flores Magon describes them)—namely, liberty, equality and fraternity—into social institutions wherein the free association for human beings and human solidarity would be possible and sustainable.

Influenced by Bakunin, Kropotkin and Malatesta, Flores Magon was an "apostle of anarchism" who taught that economic misery and degradation was

not something "natural" but produced by the "thievery of the rich, the manipulation of religion, and government repression"—as Verter succinctly puts it. Indeed, Flores Magon spent his life fighting against all forms of oppression, challenging what he describes as that "dark trinity"—capital, authority (government) and the clergy. Harassed all his life, Flores Magon died in Leavenworth penitentiary in Kansas in November, 1922. It was alleged that he died of a heart attack, but according the Librado Rivera, he had been murdered by the prison authorities. He was but forty-eight years old. It was a life dedicated to the anarchist cause. The writings of Flores Magon are not only a source of inspiration for the two editors of this commendable reader but for all libertarian socialists and anarchists. The publishers, AK Press are to be congratulated for supporting this project.

"Land and Liberty" is still a rallying cry for many people in Mexico.

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■ ESOTERICISM: THE RELIGION OF EMPIRE

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The Great Transformation
Karen Armstrong, (London: Atlantic Books 2007)

The world is in a sorry state. During the twentieth century we have seen the eruption of violence on an unprecedented scale. Two World Wars, the rise of fascism, Auschwitz, the advent of nuclear weapons, rampant poverty throughout the world, widespread genocide and political oppression, and an impending ecological crisis. Long ago radical scholars like Immanuel Wallerstein and Murray Bookchin described all this as a global or "modern crisis". Karen Armstrong in her latest book refers to such violence and destruction as "dark epiphanies". She is seemingly unaware that such violence, exploitation and oppression may be related to inter-state rivalry and conflicts, and to the ravages of global capitalism. For Armstrong interprets the crisis as due solely to a lack of "spirituality". So what is needed to counter the widespread violence and oppression is not a social but a "spiritual revolution"; a return to the esoteric visions and "spiritual technologies" of the sages, mystics and prophets of the "Axial Age". This was the age that saw the rise of such world faiths as Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism and Judeo-Christianity.

Over forty years ago the sociologist Robert Bellah wrote a classic article on religious evolution. In it he described the emergence of what he called the "historic religions" during the "great transformation" that occurred in the first millennium BCE. This period saw the rise of extensive mercantile trade, the development of metallurgy and literacy, increasing urbanization, the emergence of large-scale state empires, as well as the development of the "historic religions". Such religions, in contrast to earlier forms of tribal or archaic religion (polytheism), posited a transcendental realm beyond the natural cosmos, emphasized the importance of salvation or enlightenment through esoteric rituals, and preached a universal ethic.

Karen Armstrong's book is entitled *The Great Transformation*. Yet she makes no mention of Bellah's article, and hardly engages with the social sciences more generally. But the book is lucidly written and full of good scholarship and offers an engaging outline of the history of religions during the Axial Age. This was the term used by the philosopher Karl Jaspers to describe the period around the 6th century BCE, for the era produced some important figures in terms of religious innovation—Pythagoras, Confucius, Zarathustra, Lao Tzu, Mahavira, Buddha, and the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah all living within or around this time.

Armstrong's book focuses on four contexts, namely, China (Confucianism, Daoism), India (Vedic religion, Buddhism), Greece (philosophical rationalism), and the Eastern Mediterranean (Judaism). Clearly Armstrong, like Hegel and Arnold Toynbee before her, sees Africa as being outside history, its religions

belonging to the "dark ages". In fact, Armstrong continually alludes to the tribal context, as do apologists for empire and the historic religions, as one in which tribal conflict, egoism, disorder and dark rituals prevailed. She also describes "ancient" religion as having a "perennial philosophy", although this term is more commonly used by such religious luminaries as Rene Guenon, Seyyid Hussein Nasr and Frithjof Schuon to depict the kind of transcendental esotericism that Armstrong herself seems to espouse.

What is clearly shown in Armstrong's study, although this is quite unintentional, is the close and intimate relationship that has always existed between religion and state power. Not for nothing did the Hindu king see himself as at one with Brahman (the world spirit), the Chinese emperor as having a mandate from heaven, and the prophets of Israel, as messengers of Yahweh, as having the role of political commentators. In their emphasis on Kenosis, "emptying", the spirituality of self-surrender, the emerging religions of the Axial Age were all clearly forms of what Foucault called biopower.

There are of course fundamental differences between Vedic religion (Hinduism), Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism and Judaism. In fact, early Buddhism and Daoism can be interpreted as ethical philosophies with a naturalistic bias, and so fit uneasily into most definitions of religion—even though they later develop into religious institutions. But in her emphasis on a uniform "axial vision" Armstrong tends to play down the differences, and to deny the importance of "faith" and of metaphysical "beliefs"—although all these ideologies and the accompanying religious experiences would make little sense bereft of such metaphysical notions as Yahweh, heaven, nirvana, Dao, god or Brahman. Armstrong also insists that such notions are ineffable; they can only be experienced not talked about. This did not stop her writing a whole book about such transcendental notions!

What is characteristic of the axial religions, according to Armstrong, is that they interpreted the empirical self as either an illusion or equated it with egoism—so they emphasized the "spirituality of self-surrender". This was complemented by the notion of a transcendental "dimension" or "realm" that was essentially indefinable—either a deity or universal spirit (god, Yahweh, Brahman) or a psychological state (nirvana)—even though some Buddhist scholars interpret nirvana as the experience or consciousness of some "absolute all-mind" or an unconditioned, transcendental "ultimate reality", which makes it akin to a religious notion. But contact or experience of this "transcendental" dimension comes not through external rituals but through meditation, yogic exercises or esoteric rites, or what Armstrong describes as "spiritual technologies". The spirituality of the Axial Age is thus one involving the quest for "self-discovery", for god is within, or there is an identity between the "true" self (atma) and the divine soul or spirit (Brahman), or spiritual salvation comes from within one's own consciousness. Armstrong is thus another, the latest advocate of New Age religion, which virtually equates religion with psychology, and advocates a "religion of the self" and an "interior spirituality". But what is crucial for Armstrong

about these historic religions is that they introduced an ethical dimension to religion, as if earlier tribal religions had nothing to do with morality or human well-being. She thus emphasizes the important stress that the Axial religions gave to the repudiation of egoism and selfishness and their advocacy of compassion, generosity, tolerance, respect for sentient being, and non-violence, and the crucial importance of the Golden Rule, as expressed by Confucius: "Never do to others what you would not like them to do to you". But as Peter Kropotkin long ago argued (in his book on "Ethics") such ethical values are not exclusive to religion, esoteric or otherwise, but are intrinsic to human social life. Religious teachers such as Confucius, Buddha and Jesus were simply expressing the moral values of the common people. Humans of all cultures (including humanists and anarchists) have opposed greed, egoism, hatred, intolerance and violence, and stressed the importance of compassion, generosity, mutual aid, sharing, non-violence and respect for others. It is what Africans refer to as umunthu-personhood.

But what Armstrong fails to see is the intrinsic relationship between the religions of "transcendence"—with their emphasis on individual salvation and the denial of self-autonomy (equated with egoism) and the emergence of regional state-empires. Such religions entailed the "colonization of consciousness" which supported the emergence of state power, in the same way as Christianity served as an ideological precursor in the establishment of capitalism and the British Empire—Pax Brittanica—in Africa. Thus it is hardly surprising that Confucianism became the state religion of a unified Chinese empire, that Ashoka embraced Buddhism as the ideology of the Maurya empire in India, and that Christianity later became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Hinduism has always had a symbiotic relationship with coercive state power (the raj), and in the present context Hindutva—the kind of esoteric spirituality based on Advaita Vedanta that Armstrong embraces—has a close relationship with the Indian nuclear state and free-market capitalism. Thankfully secularism is reasserting itself in India.

The kind of New Age or esoteric religiosity that Armstrong now advocates—stemming from the religions of the axial age—is, of course, now all the rage. Spirituality is now seen as quite distinct from orthodox religion and those dreadful religious fundamentalists, and as the only answer to global capitalism. But in effect there is an unholy alliance between New Age spirituality and the capitalist system, for "spirituality" has become a commodity and has provided a way of "sanctifying" capitalism, just as it did in relation to the early empires. So rather than repudiate reason, as Armstrong contends, we need to re-affirm human rationality, as against the esoteric mysticism that she advocates. We need to repudiate both mammon and mysticism, both egoism and esotericism. We need a social revolution not a spiritual renaissance. The only kind of spirituality we should embrace is *l'esprit humain*. My advice to Karen Armstrong is, in the words of Bertrand Russell, remember your humanity and forget the rest.

■ KRISHNAMURTI AND ANARCHISM

Originally published in *Freedom* (2008)

I appreciated Francis Ellingham's reflection (Letters, 15th December) on my review of Karen Armstrong's book (*The Great Transformation,* reviewed in *Freedom* on 20th October). May I clarify some of his confusion. He asks: if ordinary people stress the importance of mutual aid and compassion, why then is the world in such a sorry mess and why do we have all those dreadful weapons of mass destruction?

The reason, of course, is not because humans are by nature benighted souls and thus in need of spiritual redemption (as Armstrong suggests); rather it has everything to do with the rise of the hierarchical forms of domination, of state power, and in the modern context, of the capitalist system.

What is therefore needed is a social transformation, which implies, of course, a change also in social consciousness. This does not imply engaging in esoteric mysticism, as Armstrong advocates, and to equate spiritualism (esoteric mysticism) with consciousness, as Francis appears to do, is obfuscating.

Anarchists, from the time of Reclus, Kropotkin and Goldman, have always emphasised the need for the transformation of consciousness, advocating the need to develop an ecological sensibility, putting an emphasis of the "consciousness of humanity" (as Krishnamurti himself expressed it), and suggesting the formation of a socialist ethic and outlook which foregrounds mutual aid, reciprocity and co-operation, thereby repudiating narrow egoism and possessive individualism.

Although Jesus, as both Kropotkin and Tolstoy emphasised, was essentially a moral teacher, who preached equality and a communistic ethic, Christianity as it developed was in flagrant contradiction to his teachings. Thus the Christian missionaries in Africa denigrated the culture of African peoples, preached the importance of private property and the work ethic, promoted bourgeois individualism, and advocated a subservient attitude towards authority. This is the reason that Christianity has been interpreted by anthropologists as an ideological precursor of colonisation and capitalism.

Francis advises me to read Krishnamurti and mentions Lao Tzu. I've been reading Krishnamurti off and on for the past forty years and wrote an article on "Lao Tzu and Anarchism" way back in 1981 (published in *Freedom* and reprinted in my *Ecology and Anarchism*). Although Krishnamurti often wrote in a rather sanctimonious style, and filched ideas right, left and centre from anarchism, Buddhism and existentialism (without any acknowledgement or reference) he would undoubtedly have been critical of Armstrong's esoteric mysticism (spiritualism).

For, like anarchists, Krishnamurti repudiated all forms of organised religion and all guru-worship. In fact, he renounced his own guru status, and severed all connections with theosophy—the esoteric cult par excellence. Krishnamurti, following in the footsteps of the anarchists, repudiated the state and all forms

of nationalism, and thus, like Bertrand Russell, emphasized the importance of developing a consciousness of humanity.

He also emphasised, like Reclus and Kropotkin, an ecological sensibility, expressed as a communion with Nature—not communion or identity with some deity, god or world spirit (as in Armstrong's esotericism) which Krishnamurti explicitly repudiated.

Anarchists, as with Krishnamurti, have always acknowledged the need for the transformation of consciousness—but not spiritualism or the recourse to some deity or world spirit. However, unlike Krishnamurti, anarchists have also expressed the need for social or direct action, the importance of class struggle, and the need to be socially-engaged in order to create a better world.

■ NAOMI KLEIN AND DISASTER CAPITALISM

Originally published in *Freedom* (2008)

Naomi Klein is one of the iconic figures of the anti-globalisation movement. Along with Susan George and George Monbiot she is a harsh critic of neo-liberal free-market capitalism. Widely acclaimed as a radical journalist, Klein's book *No Logo* was a wonderful exposé of consumer capitalism. It highlighted especially the devious politics of brand names and the machinations of multinational corporations like Wal-Mart, Nike, Shell, McDonalds and Microsoft. Impassioned, impressive, enlightening, full of facts and arguments, *No Logo* was described as the "Bible" of anti-corporate militants, and Klein herself viewed as a young funky radical, a worthy successor to Noam Chomsky.

Naomi Klein's most recent book *The Shock Doctrine* continues her assault on free market capitalism. Written with the same verve, it is equally readable and informative, completely free of academic jargon. Even so, it is well researched, as Klein, like many contemporary academics, seems to have had a team of researchers working diligently on her behalf. Whereas *No Logo* was focussed on brand names, this present book is focussed on disasters, whether natural like hurricane Katrina or the tsunami or the economic crises deliberately induced by the crusaders for free market capitalism. What she argues is that such disasters or the economic "shock therapy" advocated by the World Bank or the IMF have been events that have always heralded an expansion of free market capitalism. For example, after the tsunami disaster in Sri Lanka, in which around thirty-five thousand people lost their lives, and nearly a million displaced from their homes, the cleared beaches have been reclaimed not by local fishing communities but by the tourist industry. The beaches have essentially been privatised to cater for the expanding leisure needs of a rich overseas clientele. Likewise, the war in Iraq, a different kind of disaster, has essentially led to American companies appropriating Iraqi oil.

The central figure in Naomi Klein's chronicle of free market capitalism is the economist Milton Friedman. Surprisingly, she makes no mention of Ayn Rand, who inspired both Margaret Thatcher and the young Alan Greenspan, whom Klein describes as probably the most powerful economic policy maker in the world today (p. 268). Both Friedman and Ayn Rand shared a common vision, a vision that has literally become an economic reality since Friedman wrote *Capitalism and Freedom* way back in 1962.

According to Klein the main tenets of the fundamentalist version of capitalism are the following: a minimal state and the *deregulation* of the economy, freeing capitalists from state control; the *privatisation* of all aspects of social life, bringing health care, education, retirement pensions, communication networks and the postal services within the capitalist system as sources of profit; and, finally the cutting back on all social welfare programmes. Through the IMF and the World Bank this vision of free market capitalism has been implemented throughout the world with devastating consequences. For example, Klein

indicates the intimate links between Milton Friedman and his Chicago School of free-market economists, and the Latin America dictatorships of the 1970s. Thus when applied to the real world Friedman's vision led not to democracy but to increasing social inequalities, to dictatorships and to the murder and torture of tens of thousands of people in what amounted to a form of political genocide (102). Klein also writes insightfully on how "disaster capitalism", as she describes it, is being implemented in China and Russia.

Klein's main thesis is thus that authoritarian conditions are required for the implementation of free market capitalism, and that what has emerged in recent years—particularly in the United States—is an unholy alliance between the state and big business. This she describes as a "corporatist" system. None of this will be news to anarchists. Indeed, the radical sociologist C. Wright Mills some fifty years ago was describing the American political system as one entailing a cohesive "power elite". Kropotkin and other class struggle anarchists long ago emphasized, of course, the symbiotic relationship between capitalism and state power.

Naomi Klein's book, which runs to nearly five hundred pages, provides a very useful and impassioned critique of free market capitalism. But like George Monbiot and other anti-globalization protestors, she is not in fact "anti-capitalist"! Thus to equate anarchism with the anti-globalization movement, as do many academics, is quite misleading. For what Klein yearns for is a "decent" form of capitalism, one which allows a mixed economy of the Keynesian variety, and a "benign" state which serves not capitalist interests but the general good, and requires corporations to pay decent wages, that respects worker's rights to form trade unions, and which provides public health care, state schooling and basic social security for all members of society. Unfortunately for Klein no such "decent" capitalism or benign state has ever existed. Her book clearly illustrates in fact the real nature of capitalism. For capitalism, in essence, is an exploitative system, and always has been; it is a form of economic domination, completely undemocratic, and is throughout the world ravaging the environment in the pursuit of profit. Klein has nothing to say on the ecological impact of capitalism; but it is, as Joel Kovel argued, the enemy of nature. Likewise, no state has ever existed whose *raison d'être* is the welfare and well-being of its citizens: its function has always been to uphold systems of inequality and exploitation, or as the old liberal Adam Smith put it, the state is instituted for the defence of the rich against the poor, for those who have property against those who have none. Indeed, Kropotkin long ago argued that capitalism would cease to exist without state support, or in the present context, without also private security firms.

Thus despite her radical rhetoric, as well as providing us with a valuable critique of free market capitalism, Naomi Klein remains at heart—like George Monbiot and a host of other radicals—just an old fashioned Keynesian liberal with socialist aspirations.

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■ ECOLOGY AND CAPITALISM

Originally published in *Freedom* (2008)

Long ago the biologist Paul Sears described ecology as the "subversive science", and there is no doubt that when I first became involved in environmental issues in the 1960s, ecology was seen very much as a radical movement. The writings of Barry Commoner and Murray Bookchin emphasised that we were confronting an impending ecological crisis, and that the roots of this crisis lay firmly with an economic system—capitalism—that was geared not to human well-being but to the generation of profit, that saw no limit to growth or technology, even celebrating the achievements of the "megamachine".

Ultimately it was felt, by both Commoner and Bookchin, that capitalism was destructive not only to ourselves but to the whole fabric of life on the planet. For the underlying ethic of capitalism was indeed the technological domination of nature, an ethic that viewed the biosphere as having no intrinsic value; it was simply a resource to be exploited—by capital.

Over thirty years ago Bookchin was thus describing capitalism as "plundering the earth" in search of profits, and was highlighting with some prescience—long before Al Gore and George Monbiot—the problems of global warming—that the growing blanket of carbon dioxide would lead to destructive storm patterns, and eventually to the melting of the ice caps and rising sea levels (in *Post Scarcity Anarchism* 1971, p. 60).

This was in addition to the many other ecological problems that Bookchin identified as constituting the "modern crisis"—deforestation, urbanisation, the impact of industrial farming, pollution of the oceans, toxic chemicals and food additives, and the wanton destruction of wildlife and the subsequent loss of species diversity.

Bookchin's pioneering ecological critique of industrial capitalism has more recently been re-affirmed (with little acknowledgement to Bookchin!) in Joel Kovel's excellent *The Enemy of Nature* (2002)—the enemy, of course, being global capitalism.

How things have changed! 'Global warming' is now firmly on the political agenda, acknowledged by almost everyone apart from some die-hard right-wing neo-liberals, and everyone is being cajoled into finding ways to 'save' the planet. Such hubris is quite mind-boggling! Humans are quite unable to destroy the planet; what they are doing though an economic system based on greed and exploitation, is making many parts of the earth virtually uninhabitable for humans and other life-forms.

'Ecology' or 'green' issues have therefore now been embraced by individuals and groups right across the political spectrum. Even neo-Nazis claim to be anti-capitalist and to embrace the green perspective. So you will not be surprised to learn that the majority of major transnational corporations—including Shell, Nestlé and Coca Cola—have leapt aboard the green bandwagon and are enthusiastically demanding that we all cut our carbon emissions.

So what is going on? Four tendencies, I think, are worth noting.

One is that capitalist corporations are now in the process of 'greening' their public image. Something that the Shell corporation has been engaged in for several decades, given its awful record in terms of environmental destruction. it would be difficult to find any major transnational corporation these days that does not proudly acclaiming and advertise its ecological sensibility and its 'green' credentials.

Secondly, although most people now acknowledge that there is an environmental crisis, efforts are continually being made to convince us that this crisis has nothing to do with the capitalist economy *per se*. Deep ecologists have long been informing us that it is all due to a lack of spirituality, or that there are too many people, or even that humans are by nature either "aliens" or unwanted "parasites" on earth. Such misanthropic sentiments were long ago critiqued by Bookchin. So according to Jonathan Porritt (an adviser to New Labour on environmental issues) what we need is a suitable marriage between capitalism and spiritualism! Heaven forbid!

Development experts, in contrast, blame ecological problems, like deforestation, on the victims, the poor peasants, who because of their poverty and lack of modern agricultural techniques, are destroying—we are told—the forests. Whereas, of course, the main culprits are the logging companies, the mining corporations such as Vedanta and Rio Tinto, and the expanding ranching enterprises that cater for the increasing demand for meat.

Development experts long ago coined the concept 'sustainable development'. This has nothing to do with the conservation of Nature; it is all about sustaining 'development', that is capitalist growth.

What also clouds the issue is the suggestion that global warming and other environmental issues having nothing to do with an economic system geared to growth and private profit; it is solely due to the actions of individual 'consumers'. So we are all being urged to do what we can to "save" the planet.

Thirdly, this laudable concern for the environment by transnational corporations is clearly a front to enable such corporations to seek further opportunities for capitalist expansion, and for generating even more profit. Thus industrial wind farms covering large tracts of the countryside, the increasing production of bio-fuels (at the expense of food production), and the expansion and export for the nuclear industry to all parts of the world, are initiatives heralded as great ways of cutting 'carbon emissions' and thus helping to save the planet! But at what social and ecological cost? It is noteworthy that each of these initiatives is in the hands of big business, amply subsidised by western governments.

Finally, what we have also experienced in the last decades, as an accompaniment to the advocacy of green capitalism, is the emergence of the concept of "global management": to safeguard the planet what we therefore need (we are told) is a plethora of conservation experts and eco technocrats to monitor the planet, and to offer advice to governments and transnational corporations on how we can best "save" the planet. But "saving" the planet, as Wolfgang Sachs

argued (in *Planet Dialectics*, 1999) is in fact little more than a justification for a new wave of state interventions into the lives of ordinary people.

Anarchists need to be wary and critical of each of these four tendencies. We need, therefore, to develop a project that combines socialism (not the radical individualism of Nietzschean aesthetes) and an ecological sensibility (not neo-primitivism) as the likes of Peter Kropotkin, Edward Carpenter and Eliseé Reclus suggested long ago.

■ ECO-STATE SOCIALISM: THE GREEN PARTY MANIFESTO

Originally published in *Anarchist Studies* (2011)

The Rise of the Green Left
Derek Wall, (London: Pluto, 2010)

This little book by Derek Wall is essentially a primer and manifesto of the kind of eco-socialism advocated by the Green Party. Wall seems to have replaced Jonathon Porritt as the principal intellectual guru of the Green Party, although it is unclear whether Wall is still an active member or "principal speaker" of the party.

In many ways this is an excellent text, lucidly written, well researched, engaging and informative, and Wall's heart is clearly in the right place as he describes and supports social movements and the struggles of indigenous peoples right across the globe. He is supportive of any movement, organization or political party that is conducive to radical or "positive social change", embracing both struggles for social justice and ecological integrity. It consists essentially of four topics: the politics of climate change, a manifesto and advocacy of Marxist eco-socialism, an outline and history of green anti-capitalist thought, and a brief discussion of eco-socialism in Latin America.

The basic premise of the book is that eco-socialism can be found amongst "green parties, socialist movements, socialist groups and indigenous networks"; that it has its origins in the politics of Karl Marx (p. 2); and that it is necessary to gain "state-level power" in order to transform capitalism, and thus achieve the transition to an eco-socialist society (p. 143).

It is, however, not really a manifesto to eco-socialism; it is rather a plea for eco-*state* socialism, and state socialism, like anarcho-capitalism is essentially a contradiction in terms. Like many Marxists, Wall tends to conflate socialism with Marxism. He thus envisages some kind of dichotomy between socialism and anarchism. Yet apart from the brief mention of Edward Carpenter and Murray Bookchin, anarchism, that is libertarian socialism, is hardly mentioned in the entire text.

Bookchin, of course, is dismissed as a "sectarian" and for his alleged "rejection" of socialism (p. 85). Bookchin was no more "sectarian" than the anarcho-primitivists, or those who fervently advocate the parliamentary politics of the Green Party—he just happened to be rather abrasive and strident towards those he disagreed with. Wall disagrees with those who reject electoral politics or belong to what he describes as the "purist left" (which includes the anarchists) but he does so in a more benign fashion.

To suggest that Bookchin rejected socialism is quite untrue. He rejected Marxists authoritarian socialism. For most of his life Bookchin was an anarchist, that is a *libertarian* socialist. This he affirmed in one of his last essay on "communalism". Even so, in his last years, he was reluctant to call himself an anarchist, mainly because in the United States anarchism had become identified

with primitivism, anarcho-capitalism, Stirnerite individualism, and the obscurantist mysticism of Hakim Bey. Nevertheless, Bookchin was a socialist, but a libertarian socialist or anarchist. He was therefore naturally critical of Kovel's embrace of the kind of statist politics derived from Marx—hence their split—and as Wall recognizes Bookchin was advocating an ecological critique of capitalism long before Kovel and the Marxists. In fact, Kovel's book *The Enemy of Nature* simply appropriates Bookchin's essential thesis, with little acknowledgement. Kovel, however, seems to be one or Wall's key mentors.

Thus Wall seems blissfully ignorant of the fact that there is a form of eco-socialism that is quite independent of Marxism. It was advocated long ago by such anarchists or libertarian socialists as Eliseé Reclus, Peter Kropotkin and Gustav Landauer—all of whom were really ecological thinkers, unlike most Marxists who are now falling over themselves to affirm their green credentials! But none of these *libertarian* socialists gets even a mention in Wall's text, although he does devote some discussion to eco-fascists like Rolf Gardiner and Rudolf Bahro. As he is rather enamoured with contemporary political "leaders" like Evo Morales, Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez its hardly surprising that Wall fails to mention, let alone discuss, contemporary anarchists such as Colin Ward, Peter Marshall and Graham Purchase, as well as the Anarchist Federation, all of whom have sought to combine a libertarian socialist politics with an ecological sensibility. Like yours truly!

Anarchist initiatives, ranging from indigenous struggles over land rights to community-based organizations challenging environmental degradation, are to be acknowledged and supported; electoral politics is a cul-de-sac, leading only to social democracy, or worse, a Marxist tyranny, as Bakunin predicted.

Derek Wall ends the book with the rallying call of William Morris: "educate, agitate, organize". But it is well to remember that Morris was a romantic and critical of industrialism and that when politically active he advocated an "anti-parliamentarian" form of socialism, and thus, as Peter Marshall suggest, has more affinities with anarchism than he ever did with the Marxist politics of Engels and Hyndman, which were fundamentally authoritarian.

History seems to be repeating itself. Twenty-five years ago I reviewed Jonathon Porritt's early manifesto of the Ecology Party, *Seeing Green* (1984). It was then dubbed as a "quaint organization" by Porritt! who went on to write a book in support of a benign form of capitalism, and to become an advisor on environmental issues to Tony Blair and New Labour. Let's hope Derek Wall (and Caroline Lucas) don't follow Porritt's trajectory!

■ ANARCHISM IN THE ACADEMY, 2010

R. Amster et al (2009)

Contemporary Anarchist Studies
(London: Routledge)

As a late comer to Academia, I have been a university teacher for almost forty years, teaching Anthropology at Goldsmiths College. Like John Dewey and Michel Foucault I have always looked on teaching as a "vocation" and have spent many years of my life engaged in ethnographic fieldwork. For the same period, ever since I met Bill Gate in 1966 (he was a living replica of Bakunin) I have also been actively engaged in the anarchist movement. However, by temperament I belong to a tribe of scholars who went extinct in the nineteenth century. They were known as naturalists. None of my intellectual heroes are, in fact, academics: they include Richard Jefferies, Charles Darwin, Ernest Thompson Seton, and Peter Kropotkin. I have to admit that I have something of an aversion towards "academics", especially as I failed to get into university. They often seem so elitist, pretentious, and to engage in what Frederick Barth described as "stereotyped originality", following intellectual fashions and promoting as "new" or "original" ideas that are generally a part of the common currency.

However, I must say, as both libertarian socialist (anarchist) and a reluctant academic that I was naturally drawn towards an anthology that aimed to connect anarchism with academic scholarship.

This book is by academics—all the contributors are either university professors or Ph.D. students with an interest in anarchism. It is also written for academics, and in praise of academic anarchists. Indeed, some of the contributors to the anthology are among those in the frontispiece who loudly proclaim what an amazing and outstanding collection of articles the anthology contains. And these articles, we are again informed, have been written by "the world's leading anarchist scholars"; presumably these are the professors and not the Ph.D. students!? Most of the contributors are from the United States, the anthology itself originating from a conference of the American Educational Studies, held at the University of Virginia in 2005. Thus many of the articles are focussed on what is described as "anarchist pedagogy". I really do wonder what the likes of Sam Dolgoff and Albert Meltzer would have made of this anthology, particularly as some of the academics do, with respect, write rather pretentious nonsense. One contributor informs us that "everything happens somewhere" (true!) and elephants and cabbages are anarchists.

The anthology consists of twenty-eight articles on a wide range of topics and issues, and though of varied quality, most of the contributions are thoughtful and substantive. Some really are engaging and the collection as a whole is informative and should be of interest to most anarchists.

The anthology as a whole is singularly free, thankfully, of any discussion of the so-called "new" anarchism, apart from those steeped in the "postmodern

matrix". Although there is a nodding reference to the philosopher Robert Nozick, there is no mention at all of Ayn Rand and anarcho-capitalism. The poetic terrorism of Hakim Bey and the anarcho-primitivist of Zerzan are also barely mentioned. Stirner appears to have relevance only for those who have a penchant for poststructuralism. I suppose this must be so, given that the focus is on the "Academy". But significantly, unlike the "new" anarchists and the Marxists who generally dismiss an earlier generation of anarchists as "obsolete" or "outdated" or as having no relevance at all to contemporary political struggles, many of the contributors to the anthology draw insightfully on the words of Proudhon, Kropotkin and Goldman. In fact, two contributors argue that a "return" to the theoretical and historical insights offered by the early anarchists is vital to any anarchist future. This doesn't stop one contributor dismissing the ideas or "bearded 19th century European males", although, of course, our intellectual forebears also include women like Goldman, De Cleyre and Lucy Parsons.

Given the number and diversity of the essays within the Anthology, an adequate review of the text is untenable. But to give the reader some idea of its scope I will briefly note some of the topics and issues discussed within the text: the political philosophy of Foucault and Ranciere; the pedagogy of Ivan Illich; several ethnographic accounts of the anti-globalization protests; the relation of anarchism to academic teaching; Christian anarchism; the logic of cultural networking; the politics of the Animal Liberation Front; and several critiques of the ideology of global capitalism.

Altogether a worthy collection, though it hardly constitutes a reader in anarchist studies, given its Eurocentric bias, its lack of any real historical depth, and little engagement with any anarchists outside of Academia—except as objects of study. Anarcho-syndicalists and working class anarchists that muster around such organizations as Class War, Black Flag and Solidarity are simply not within its radar.

Although I warmed to the text I have three essential misgivings with the anthology.

Firstly, several of the contributions to the anthology seem to suffer from myopia, or some kind of historical amnesia. For instance: they seem to have the strange and mistaken impression that the anarchist movement went into some kind of hibernation after the Spanish Civil War, only to re-emerge when they arrive on the scene in Seattle, to usher in the "new" anarchism. Apparently David Graeber along with Tony Blair suddenly discovered that there were many anarchists involved in the demonstrations against W.T.O. in Seattle and elsewhere—at the very heart of the anti-globalization protests. Hardly news! Leaving aside the activities of the Freedom groups during the Second World War—when several anarchists were imprisoned—these academic anarchists seem blissfully unaware that anarchists have been around, and have a marked presence (and I speak from personal experience) in all the major demonstrations that have occurred over the past fifty years. Demonstrations and protests against the Vietnam war, against the apartheid system in South Africa, against the

proliferation of nuclear weapons, against various environmental projects, and against the iniquitous poll tax—all these protests have involved anarchists.

In any case, the anti-globalization movement was not particularly anarchist; its main advocates were trade unionists, Marxists of various hues, liberals like Naomi Klein and Susan George, and welfare state socialists, even though anarchists within the movement may have expressed anarchistic strategies and forms of organization.

Indeed, there was such an upsurge of anarchist activity in the 1960s that the Marxist historian Eric Hobsbaum was provoked into writing his rather vacuous "*Reflections on Anarchism*" (1969). His main argument was that the appeal of anarchism was emotional rather than intellectual, its politics a form of extremism, that it belonged to a pre-industrial era, and was logically akin to the neo-liberalism of Milton Friedman!

Anarchism alive! It never actually died.

Linked with this—a second misgiving—is the equally mistaken idea that some of the contributors to this volume clearly have, namely that it is only recently, through the Anarchist Studies Network and various academic associations, that anarchist studies and research have been initiated. Apparently, before the Seattle protest, nobody had ever engaged in anarchistic research, or had offered reflections from an anarchist perspective, on current events and issues. The editors admit that "Anarchism in the Academy" is nothing new, citing the work of Chomsky, Bookchin and Ehrlich. But note: for many years History Workshop had an important group devoted to the study of anarchism; and I well recall meetings at Ruskin College, Leeds University and elsewhere that took place around thirty years ago. At these meetings—which were informal gatherings rather than academic jamborees—the likes of Peter Marshall, Nicolas Walter, Geoffrey Ostegaard, Ronald Sampson and John Quail offered papers on various topics and issues relating to the anarchist history, anarchism as a political philosophy, and the relation of anarchism to contemporary issues and events. A 1985 conference produced a useful collection of essays *For Anarchism* edited by David Goodway, who along with John Moore and Tom Cahill went on to organize the Anarchist Research Group which flourished for many years, and produced a *Bulletin of Anarchist Research*, a precursor of *Anarchist Studies*.

In the United States anarchist research has also been flourishing for many years, as indicated by the publication of many useful collections; examples being the Black Rose publication *The Anarchist Papers* (1986-1990), Terry Perlin's edited volume on *Contemporary Anarchism* (1979) and Howard J. Ehrlich's *Re-Inventing Anarchism* (1979). The journal *Social Anarchism* Ehrlich has edited since 1980—some thirty years of research!

As for the suggestion that we need to offer critical reflections on contemporary events from an anarchist perspective—please! Not only have the above publications, but anarchist periodicals such as *Organize!*, *Black Flag*, *Class War* and, of course, *Freedom* been doing this very thing for several decades. But then these academics don't appear to have read such periodicals.

My final misgiving relates to those contributors who are somewhat besotted with postmodern/poststructuralist high theory and then proceed to lecture anarchists as if they belong to some intellectual kindergarten. Anarchism as a political philosophy has always situated itself, like Liberalism and Marxism, within the Enlightenment tradition at least with regard to its radical aspects. Thus the embrace by so-called postmodernists of the reactionary anti-universalist philosophies of the counter-Enlightenment has always struck me as rather weird! But one post anarchist contributor to the anthology outlines fourteen aspects of poststructuralist theory in order to enlighten us. One is to critique "Platonic totalitarianism". Tell me, has any anarchist ever embraced such a doctrine? Another is a "critique of the subject". Whether interpreted as the Cartesian disembodied ego or the abstract asocial individual of bourgeois theory, anarchists have been critiquing the "subject" for the last hundred years. Indeed, Marx and Bakunin lampooned the bourgeois "subject" in the middle of the nineteenth century, long before poststructuralist philosophers came along. But of course, they did not go to extremes: they acknowledged that humans were species-beings, and that they were social agents not simply an "effect" or "function" of language or power. Then we are informed that we should focus on "direct, non-mediated struggles". Heavens! Where have these poststructuralist academics been? Anarchists have been advocating and practising direct action for the past hundred years. But then perhaps I am being unfair?; the contributor did suggest he was stating the obvious. Equally obvious is that the poststructuralist mandarins have appropriated many of the political ideas of anarchism, with little or no acknowledgement, wrapped them up in scholastic discourse, and presented them as new radical ideas. Such ideas have certainly excited some academics.

Another "postmodern" contributor, in an essay that is purely abstract and philosophical, suggests that anarchism suspends "ontology" and advocates a mode of thinking in which "anything goes", and concludes by suggesting, with postmodern revelry, that he affirms all our present conditions. Is he serious? Anarchism is a materialist philosophy, and does not suspend "ontology"; nor does it advocate a theory of "anything goes", and it certainly does not affirm "perhaps all our present conditions". Such epistemological relativism and Platonic detachment is vacuous.

Anarchists repudiate capitalist exploitation. Why on earth do they become involved in anti-capitalist demonstrations if they think "anything goes"?! They also repudiate state oppression, neo-liberalism and fascism because they acknowledge universal values—derived from the Enlightenment—those of equality, liberty, social solidarity, tolerance and the essential dignity of all humans.

Linked with postmodernism is the tendency to write in an elevated style, as Bourdieu described it. Thus we have such phrases as "the diasporic aesthetic, which characterizes the form of appearance of the nomadic educational machine". This may impress members of the Research assessment exercise and other academics, but it fails to excite ordinary mortals like me, and mars what

is otherwise an interesting essay. One contribution explicitly argues that anarchists should "talk plain", writing in ways that are readily understandable to working people and cites Emma Goldman's work as an example of readily accessible comprehensible English. But of course, most anarchists from Bakunin to Chomsky have always written in an accessible style as they have sought to communicate with a wider public, mainly through pamphlets. Only postmodern academics have sought to bamboozle us with their elevated style. Fortunately, most of the essays in this collection are relatively free of academic jargon, and some are quite engaging.

To conclude I found it strange that an anthology devoted to "anarchy in the academy" should make so little mention of the current crisis within the university, given the corporate takeover of this august institution in recent years. Nevertheless, it is a very worthwhile text. But, as I said, I do wonder what Albert Meltzer would have made of it.

■ FORGOTTEN ANARCHIST-FEMINISTS

Originally published in *Anarchist Studies* (2011)

Dreamers of a New Day
Sheila Rowbotham, (London: Verso)

Author of a recent splendid biography of Edward Carpenter (2008), Sheila Rowbotham is a well-known socialist historian and feminist. Her books *Women, Resistance and Revolution* (1972) and *Hidden from History* (1973) were pioneer studies of women's liberation, outlining their struggles against social oppression and gender inequalities. *Dreamers of a New Day* is her most recent book. Like Rowbotham's earlier historical studies, it is a work of fine scholarship, well researched, lucidly written, and intellectually engaging.

The book is focussed on Britain and the United States, and covers the period from around 1880 to the beginning of the First World War. This was, of course, a period of immense social change, with the resurgence of industrial capitalism—reflected in the growth of urban slums, the advent of large-scale corporations, mass production and sweated labour, and the widespread movement of the human population—particularly immigration into the United States.

Dreamers of a New Day essentially details the response of women across the political spectrum to these social changes, and the sense that they had that a new way of life was possible. It thus brings together a mass of interesting material on, for example, the following: birth control campaigns; the efforts of women to democratize personal relationships and thus explore new forms of sexuality; the links between women's efforts at emancipation and the socialist movement, particularly the role of women in the trade unions and their own labour organizations, including the suffragettes. It is thus a very wide-ranging text, discussing numerous women's organizations and the many social issues that involved women around the turn of the twentieth century. It carries the subtitle "Women who invented the twentieth century", for many of the issues raised by these "rebel women", as Rowbotham describes them, have now become a part of everyday life. Indeed, she suggests that women in the early years of the twentieth century had transformed many of the conditions of their own lives, decades before the intellectuals of the 1960s discovered "everyday life" as an arena for radical politics.

I have only two misgivings with regard to this valuable book. The first is that Rowbotham often, somewhat disconcertingly, flips back and forth in the text between Britain and America. The second is that there is no real introduction to the contents of the book—for the introduction is a rather breathless sweep over numerous issues, women's organizations and countless women rebels and reformers—Rowbotham mentioning (but often no more than mentioning) within the space of nine pages, no less than forty-one different women.

But for me, what was of special interest about the book is that Rowbotham not only discusses the struggles of African American women, but includes within

the text many insightful discussions of the anarchist women, who were also involved in feminist issues. These include: Lizzie Holmes, Lucy Parsons, Emma Goldman, Voltairine de Cleyre, Helena Born, Kate Austin, and Anela Heywood. All were American anarchists who were strong defenders of a woman's right to sexual freedom, and thus strong advocates of free love and birth control and of direct action in personal life as well as in politics. They rebelled against the notion that it was in a woman's nature to be "an angel at the hearth", that is, simply a housewife. Rowbotham indicates that the writings of Walt Whitman and Henrik Ibsen had an important influence on these "rebel women".

In Britain Rose Witcop, who came from a Jewish working class immigrant family in the London/East End, lived in a free-union with the anti-parliamentarian socialist, Guy Aldred. The younger sister of Rudolf Rocker's life-long partner Milly Witcop, Rose supported Margaret Sanger in being a strong advocate of birth control.

Other anarchists who were involved in feminist issues and in countering women's oppression, and are briefly mentioned by Rowbotham include: Margaret Anderson, Adeline Champney, Louise Michel, Marie Ganz, Lillian Harman and Lily Gair Wilkinson. It is of interest that few of these women anarchists are mentioned in the standard histories of anarchism by Max Nettlau and Peter Marshall. (But see Margaret S. Marsh (1981) *Anarchist Women: 1870-1920* Philadelphia: Temple University Press).

Significantly, although eugenics—selective breeding—was an important movement at the turn of the twentieth century, even being embraced by political radicals, Rowbotham indicates that the anarchist-feminists, like Voltairine de Cleyre and Lizzie Holmes, were opposed to eugenic ideas, particularly their authoritarian implications.

As a historian, Rowbotham suggests that to think about the problems and the struggles that people faced in the past, might help us in the present. In this regard, *Dreamers of a New Day* is a useful and very worthwhile text.

■ THE ANARCHIST IDEA OF COMMUNISM

Originally published in *Freedom* (2012)

The Idea of Communism

Costas Douzinas and Slavoj Žižek (eds), (London: Verso 2010)

In March 2009 a large conference was held at the Institute of Education in London to discuss the "Idea" of communism. It brought together a number of Marxist philosophers, mostly academic celebrities, scholars such as Jacques Rancière, Antonio Negri, Terry Eagleton, Jean-Luc Nancy and Slavoj Žižek. It was focussed around a keynote address by Alain Badiou. An ex-Maoist, Badiou is now heralded as one of the great philosophers of the twentieth century, at least by his Marxist friends. Badiou, a latter-day Platonist, suggested that communism was the only political ideal worthy of a true philosopher, and that it had the status of an eternal idea. It was essentially a kind of hypothesis about emancipation. The question was therefore posed as to whether the term "communism", given its association with the "historical failure"—the communism of the Soviet regime under Stalin—could be usefully applied to the "new forms" of radical politics that the Marxist academics at the conference clearly felt they were initiating. This book is thus a collection of some rather abstruse reflections on the "Idea" of communism by some fifteen academics, although who they are and where they come from is never indicated in the text.

The term communism, of course, has many different meanings and connotations—the determinate negation of capitalism, the state control of the economy, the visions of the nineteenth century utopian socialists, the state capitalism of the current Chinese Communist Party, or, as Marx wrote, "the positive expression of the abolition of private property" (p. 139). As Michael Hardt puts it, in an essay relatively free of scholastic jargon, communism is the affirmation of common property, as opposed to that of private and state (public) property (p. 144). Kropotkin of course was suggesting this at the end of the nineteenth century.

The book has a rather in-house feel to it, as the likes of Badiou, Žižek, Rancière, and Negri form a kind of exclusive Marxist coterie who continually refer to each other's work. The reflections offered in the text are also rather exclusive, for many of the essays simply offer rather scholastic commentaries on such luminaries as Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Zedong, reflecting on what they had to say about communism, although such political reactionaries as Hegel, Nietzsche and Heidegger often get an affirmative mention. These academic Marxists seems blissfully unaware that there have been socialists/communists outside the Marxist tradition. When reference is made to political theorists outside the usual Marxist canon what are we offered?—the radical universalism of the Islamic scholar Sayyid Qutb, the intellectual inspiration of the Muslim Brotherhood, and the plebeian socialism of Garcia Linera, the current vice-president of Bolivia. Moreover, some of the essays are written in the kind of scholastic

Marxism that is barely intelligible. Thus we get such expressions as: "the ideological operation of the Idea of communism is the imaginary projection of the political real into the symbolic of History" (p. 11). The book in fact is full of platitudes wrapped up in scholastic jargon. Interestingly, some of the more informative and insightful essays—Hallward on political will, Bosteels on Lenin and left-wing communism, and Douzinas on human rights—are not in fact by the famous academic gurus.

What then constitutes the "new" Marxist politics, and its vision of a "radical emancipatory project"?

Firstly, whereas generations of radical scholars and activists have usually thought that the concepts of socialism and communism are virtually synonymous, we are now informed that socialism implies the welfare capitalism of the Keynesian variety and is quite distinct for the pure communism that Badiou writes about. That welfare capitalism is a form of socialism is a contradiction in terms, although it may incorporate socialist elements in order to counter the malign effects of capitalism.

Secondly, there is the recognition the modern state is essentially an "agent of capitalism". This surely is hardly news. Marx and Kropotkin were emphasizing this more than a hundred years ago.

Thirdly, we are told that the new form of politics will be a "politics without a party" and will take its "distance from statism". Being a communist Antonio Negri tells us, means "being against the state". Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mao all clearly argued for a political party that would represent the interests of the working class, and that real politics would involve the "conquest of state power", the destruction of capitalism, and then, allegedly, the "withering" away of the state. The autonomous Marxists now seem to repudiate entirely this Marxist political strategy. They have thus embraced, without any acknowledgement, the kind of politics that has been advocated and practised by anarchist communists (libertarian socialists) for more than a century.

Fourthly, Jacques Rancière, the guru of the postanarchists, suggests that communism is enacted when workers and ordinary people struggle for basic rights and run themselves the factories, schools, administrations etc. Again, self-management is something that Kropotkin and anarchists generally have been emphasizing for many generations. Being a communist, Negri suggests, means "building a world where the exploitation of capital and subjection to the state are eliminated" (p. 161). Isn't this what anarchists have always advocated?

Fifthly, there is constant reference throughout the text to human rights, the class struggle, universal values, and the emancipation of humanity. Does this imply that postmodernism, along with post-Marxism, has had its day?

Finally, it is worth noting that Slavoj Žižek, in contrast to the anti-Marxist Marxists like Badiou and Negri, is a latter-day Jacobin and Marxist-Leninist. His vision of the "new emancipatory politics" thus involves the establishment of a "centralized dictatorial power" to enact "strict egalitarian justice" through "disciplinary terror". How this fits in with the two other concepts of the eternal

Idea of communism, political voluntarism and trust in the people is never explained. Peter Hallward in contrast emphasizes the importance of voluntary and autonomous action and direct participation, but throughout most of the discussions in this book, in true Marxist fashion, there is very little mention of liberty, and not very much about community. The concept of free communism emphasized by Kropotkin and libertarian socialists (anarchist communists) is quite beyond its radar; although we are informed that one of the theses of the conference is that "Freedom cannot flourish without equality and equality does not exist without freedom" (p. x). The Marxists are just discovering for themselves what Bakunin was affirming way back in the nineteenth century in his opposition to the statist politics of Karl Marx.

■ THE LEGACY OF SAINT-IMIER

Originally published in *Organize*! (2012)

In the opening pages of my book on Bakunin (1993) I offered a quote from the Ghanian poet Ayi Kewi Armah. It reads "The present is where we get lost; if we forget our past and have no vision of the future". This phrase comes to mind when we come to celebrate the iconic founding of the anarchist movement at Saint Imier in Switzerland in September 1872.

Engaging with the past does not involve some kind of ancestor worship, any more than envisaging a better future for humankind entails us becoming lost in utopian dreams. Anarchists should certainly not feel embarrassed in celebrating the achievements of an earlier generation of libertarian socialists—not as historical curiosities but as a source of inspiration and ideas. Here I wish simply to offer some reflections on the kind of anarchism, or revolutionary socialism, that emerged from the political struggles of members of the First International, around 1870.

As a political philosophy, anarchism has had perhaps the worst press. It has been ignored, maligned, ridiculed, abused, misunderstood and misinterpreted by writers from all sides of the political spectrum: Marxists, democrats, conservatives and liberals. Theodore Roosevelt, the American president, famously described anarchism as a "crime against the whole human race" and in common parlance anarchy is invariably linked with disorder, violence and nihilism. A clear understanding of anarchism is further inhibited by the fact that the term "anarchist" has been applied to a wide variety of philosophies and individuals. Thus Gandhi, Spencer, Tolstoy, Berdyaev, Stirner, Ayn Rand, Nietzsche, along with other familiar figures such as Proudhon, Bakunin and Goldman, have all been described as anarchists. This has led Marxist critics, such as John Molyneux, to dismiss "anarchism" as a completely incoherent political philosophy, both in its theories and in the strategy for social change.

But it isn't? For what has to be recognized is that anarchism is fundamentally a historical movement and political tradition that emerged around 1870, mainly among working class members of the International Working Men's Association, widely known as the First International. It involved a split, or "great schism" (as James Joll called it) within the Association. It is usually described as if it focused around a personal dispute between Karl Marx and Michael Bakunin. But, as Cole and others have suggested, this schism was not simply a clash of personalities; it involved two factions within the socialist movement, and two quite different conceptions of socialism, of the processes of revolutionary change and the conditions of human liberation. The anarchist faction did not originally describe themselves as anarchists but rather as "federalists" or as "anti-authoritarian socialists", but they came to adopt the label of their Marxists opponents, and describe themselves as "anarchist communists". As a political movement and tradition anarchism thus emerged among the workers of Spain, France, Italy and Switzerland in the aftermath of the Paris Commune.

Among its more well-known proponents were Eliseé Reclus, Francois Dumertheray, James Guillaume, Errico Malatesta, Carlo Cafiaro, Jean Grave and Peter Kropotkin. (Louise Michel was also closely associated with the movement, but she was deported to New Caledonia after the defeat of the Paris Commune, along with many thousand communards. She spent six years in exile). Between 1870 and 1930 anarchism, or revolutionary/libertarian socialism, spread throughout the world, and was thus by no means restricted to Europe. By the end of the nineteenth century there were, of course, other strands of anarchism, but anarchist-communism was certainly the dominant tendency. It is important to note that class struggle anarchism was not the creation of academic scholars, but emerged within working class activism, and expressed a revolt against the social and working conditions of industrial capitalism. Kropotkin's earliest writings were entitled *Words of a Rebel* (1885) adopted from the Swiss anarchist periodical *Le Revolt*. Kropotkin, who joined the General Section of the First International in February 1872, described anarchism as a kind of synthesis between radical liberalism, with its emphasis on the liberty of the individual, and socialism or communism, which implied a repudiation of capitalism and an emphasis on communal life and voluntary associations. This synthesis is well illustrated in Bakunin's famous adage: "That liberty without socialism is privilege and injustice, and that socialism without liberty is slavery and brutality".

The tendency of Marxists academic philosophers and Stirnerite individualists (or egoists) to make a radical dichotomy between anarchism and socialism is therefore, on both conceptual and historical grounds, quite misleading and distorts our understanding of socialism.

Anarchism, or at least the kind of class struggle anarchism that was advocated by the social revolutionaries of the First International, can be defined in terms of four essential tenets or principles. Firstly, a rejection of state power and all forms of hierarchy and oppression; a critique of all forms of power and authority that inhibit the liberty of the individual, viewed, of course, as a social being, not as a disembodied ego, or some abstract possessive individual, still less as a fixed benign essence. As a resolution of the St. Imier congress put it: the first duty of the proletariat is the "destruction of all political power".

Secondly, the complete repudiation of the capitalist market economy, along with its wage system, private property, its competitive ethos, and the ideology of possessive individualism. In fact, the early class struggle anarchists were fervently anti-capitalist, referring to the wage system as "wage slavery".

Thirdly, it expressed a vision of a society based solely on mutual aid and voluntary co-operation, a form of social organization that would provide the fullest expression of human liberty and all forms of social life that were independent of both the state and capitalism. Class struggle anarchists thus believed in voluntary organizations, not in chaos, ephemerality or "anything goes", and they viewed both tribal and kin-based societies and everyday social life in more complex societies as exhibiting some of the principles of anarchy. Both Eliseé Reclus and Kropotkin were deeply interested in the social life of tribal peoples, or "societies without government".

Fourthly, the early anarchists, like Marxists, embraced the radical aspects of the Enlightenment—a stress on the importance of critical reason and empirical science; a rejection of all knowledge claims based on traditional authority, mystical institution and divine revelation; and an affirmation of such universal human values as liberty, solidarity and equality. Anarchism was thus a form of ethical socialism.

As revolutionary socialism or anarchism developed in the twenty years after the Paris Commune of 1871, it tended to critique, and to define itself in relation to three other forms of radical politics. All are still around and have their contemporary advocates. These are mutualism, radical individualism or egoism, and Marxism.

Although Kropotkin and the class struggle anarchists always acknowledged that Proudhon expressed libertarian sentiments, and was a pioneer and an inspiration in the development of anarchism, they were always critical of the radical tradition that became known as Mutualism. Embraced by many American individualist anarchists, such as Warren, Spooner and Tucker, this tradition affirmed the market economy, private property and petty-commodity production—all of which were rejected by the anarchist communists.

They were equally critical of the kind of radical individualism (egoism) expressed by Max Stirner, suggesting it was a metaphysical doctrine remote from real social life and bordered on nihilism. Kropotkin stressed that it was meaningless to emphasize the supremacy of the "unique one" in conditions of oppression and economic exploitation, and felt that Stirner's strident egoism ran counter to the feelings of mutual solidarity and equality that most people acknowledged.

Finally, of course, from its inception; the anarchists were highly critical of the kind of politics expressed by Marx and Engels, which later became known as social democracy, or simply Marxism. In their famous *Communist Manifesto* (1846) Marx and Engels emphasized that the communist party was to organize the working class, in order to achieve "the conquest of political power".

This would entail the establishment of a "workers' state" or "the dictatorship of the proletariat" in which all forms of production (including agriculture), as well as transport, communication and banking, would be "owned" and administered through the Nation State. It would involve, as Marx and Engels put it, "the most decisive centralizations of power in the hands of the state authority". Bakunin and the anarchist communists of course, always stressed that the parliamentary road to socialism would lead to reformism, and the "seizure of state power" by the communist party on behalf of the working people would lead to tyranny and state capitalism. And history seems to have proved them right on both counts.

In contrast to "political action"—involvement with state power—which anarchists always felt formed a symbiotic relationship with capitalism—the early anarchists advocated "direct action". This was expressed through insurrectionism, anarcho-syndicalism or community based politics. In recent years,

class struggle anarchism, as advocated and practised by an earlier generation of communist anarchists, has been declared "obsolete", or "outmoded", or dismissed as "leftism" by contemporary anarchists, mostly by those ensconced in the academy. At the end of the twentieth century, we are informed, a "new" anarchism has emerged, a "post-left anarchy". It seems to consist of a rather esoteric pastiche of several political tendencies; namely, anarcho-primitivism, the anarcho-capitalism of Rothbard and Ayn Rand, the "poetic terrorism" that derives from Nietzsche and the avant-garde, embraced with fervour by Hakim Bey, the radical individualism (egoism) of the contemporary devotees of Max Stirner, and so-called "post-anarchism", which derives from the writings of such academic mandarins as Derrida, Lyotard, Foucault and Deleuze. There is nothing new or original in these various currents of thought, and the idea that an earlier generation of anarchists supported modernity or modernism is quite perverse. For the "old" anarchists, the libertarian socialists, completely repudiated three of the key components of so-called "modernity"—the democratic state, the capitalist market economy, and the "abstract" individual of bourgeois philosophy.

We need therefore to continue to re-affirm the legacy of anarchist communism, as it was first formulated at the congress of St. Imier long ago, as well as making it relevant to contemporary social and political struggles.

KARL MARX—ANTHROPOLOGIST

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The Polish philosopher Leszek Kolakowski began his well-known history of Marxism with the words "Karl Marx was a German philosopher". True, Marx studied philosophy at the University of Berlin in his early twenties, and had a passion for German philosophy; particularly that of Hegel, but it hardly needs saying that Marx cannot be understood simply as a philosophical thinker. Better known, perhaps, as a political journalist, an erudite economist, and a revolutionary socialist, Marx was also, in an important sense, an anthropologist, for he always repudiated scholastic metaphysics. He can indeed be described as one of the founding ancestors of anthropology.

But what also has to be recognized is that Marx was an absolutely voracious reader, endlessly taking notes on everything that he read. He was therefore well-versed not only in philosophy, economics, history and the natural sciences, but also in literature, being particularly fond of the poetry of Aeschylus, Shakespeare and Goethe. Marx had a truly encyclopaedic mind, a restless and inquiring intellect, and was interested, as an anthropologist, in understanding all aspects of life.

The German Enlightenment scholar Immanuel Kant—like Marx, Kant was more than simply a philosopher—famously defined anthropology as the study of what it means to be human. This, in fact, is what the term anthropology in Greek denotes (*Anthropos:* humanity, *logos*: reason, language, the study of). Marx's anthropology, as Thomas Patterson affirmed, was largely derived from the Enlightenment. Indeed, he described Marx as a "child of the Enlightenment" (2009: p. 39). It was a kind of anthropology, however, that was critical, dialectical and historical, and it involved the embrace of some of the key tenets of the Enlightenment legacy. These were the following: the importance of rationality, and the use of reason, along with that of empirical knowledge; the acknowledgement of the existence of the natural world independent of human cognition and representation; the fundamental importance of human freedom; the denial of all knowledge claims based on authority or mystical intuition; and a recognition of the historicity not only of nature but of human beings and human social life and culture.

Scholars within the Enlightenment tradition—scholars as different as Erich Fromm and Bruce Trigger—have long recognized that there is an essential "paradox", or basic contradiction, at the heart of human life; an inherent duality in social existence. For on the one hand humans are fundamental organic beings, and intrinsically a part of nature; while on the other hand, through their self-consciousness, sociality, and symbolic culture, they are in a sense unique and separate from nature. They have what Cicero called a 'second nature'. The social ecologist Lewis Mumford suggest that humans have a 'two-fold' life. Anthropology, as Marx envisaged it, firmly embraced this paradox, putting an equal emphasis on our organic life and our shared humanity (as with Kant)

and on the social and cultural diversity of human life (as with Herder). As Marx expressed it in his definition of communism, anthropology entailed a combination of naturalism and humanism (1975: p. 348).

Drawing on the Enlightenment legacy, Marx's anthropology, as a study of what it means to be human, is focused around four key concepts—namely, nature, society, history and science—concepts which some contemporary anthropologists treat with unwarranted scepticism, if not with derision. We may explore Marx's own conception of anthropology and the human subject in relation to these four fundamental concepts.

1. Nature

Although Marx was an ontological realist, affirming the existence of a physical world independent of humans, this, of course, did not imply a dualistic metaphysic (as Karl Popper implied), or the idea that humans were independent of nature. To the contrary, Marx, in contrast to most sociologists and contemporary postmodernist anthropologists, strongly emphasized that humans were natural beings, and intrinsically a part of nature. As he put it: "nature is man's inorganic body" (1975: p. 328). For Marx, humans were natural beings. They were active, living beings; embodied, sensuous, conscious with feelings and emotions, and with inherent dispositions and capacities, as well as being, like other animals, limited, conditioned and suffering beings. As he wrote in his early philosophical notebooks: humans are natural beings "firmly planted on the solid earth and breathing all the powers of nature" (1975: p. 389). The relationship between humans and nature was thus essentially dialectical, not simply relational.

This meant of course, for Marx, that any understanding of human social life (or history) must begin with one basic premise: namely, the existence of human individuals, and the fact of their inter-relationship with the rest of nature. It was through their productive relations, their creative interactions with nature to meet their basic needs, that humans produced their material life, or what Marx described as their "modes of life". Forms of consciousness, specifically culture or ideology, emerged, he felt, from within these "real-life" processes. As Marx famously put it: "life is not determined by consciousness but consciousness by life" (Marx & Engels 1965: p. 38).

Whether or not this implies a form of economic determinism has long been debated by scholars from right across the political spectrum. Given that Marx was essentially a dialectical thinker, the material aspects of human life must be seen as the basis or anchorage for cultural configurations, or what Ernst Cassirer described as symbolic forms (art, religion, philosophy, science) rather than involving any direct causal relationship.

Yet it is important to recognize that Marx fervently rejected the idea of a fixed human nature or essence, for in being a part of nature, rather than the creation of some divine agent, humans had evolved historically. Marx saw no antithesis between nature and human history, and like Darwin, stressed the historicity of human nature. His life-long associate and friend, Friedrich Engels,

wrote a famous essay entitled "The part played by labour in the transition from ape to man", stressing the importance of labour—human productive interactions with nature—in the emergence of "modern" humans. Along with erect posture, the expansion and reorganization of the human brain, the dexterity of the human hand, tool-making, language and symbolic culture, and the emergence of a more complex society, labour is seen by Engels (and Marx) as the key factor in the emergence of *Homo Sapiens*.

2. Society

The important point, of course, is that humans are not only natural beings, but also, Marx insisted, human natural beings, species-beings, with sociality and self-consciousness. Humans, therefore, as Marx continually stressed, are social beings, always enmeshed in a complex web of social relations. History, he wrote, human social life, is the "true natural history of man" (*mensch*: humanity) (1975: p. 191). Our relationship with nature is therefore always intrinsically social, and even our perceptions of nature are socially and culturally mediated, though not wholly determined by our culture.

Importantly, as with our later sociologists, Marx emphasized that human perceptions, thoughts and actions, are shaped to an important degree by the patterns of social relations, and the cultures into which humans are born, and which they help to actualize, maintain or transform. Marx famously remarked that humans make their own history but they do not make it just as they please, for past traditions always influence living humans. Marx was, therefore, one of the first social scientists to explore what later became known as the "duality" between social structures (relations) and human agency, and, for Marx, this relationship between social forms and the human individuals was always interdependent and dialectical.

Marx was therefore always critical of the two extremes in approaching this "duality". The first extreme, as reflected later in Durkheimian sociology and culture theory (in its various guises) virtually obviates human agency, viewing human thought and action as largely determined or an "effect" of either symbolic culture (as with Leslie White and many postmodernists) or ideology (Althusser) or power (Foucault). Marx was critical of such sociological determinism, and (again) famously remarked:

"History (that is, social life) does noting, it does not possess immense riches, it does not fight battles! It is real living men who do all this.... History is nothing but the activity of men in pursuit of their ends" (Marx & Engels 1956: p. 93).

On the other hand, Marx was equally critical of the other extreme, which tended to put a fundamental emphasis on the individual, and to downplay or ignore the importance of history, and of social relations and culture. He was therefore always critical of the "abstract" individual of the classical philosophers, who seemingly posited the human individual as outside nature and society. He thus made some trenchant criticisms of Feuerbach's humanism, Stirner's radical individualism, which in its emphasis on the unique 'ego' dismissed

humanity as a "spook", and the asocial possessive individualism of Hobbes and the bourgeois political economists (Ricardo and Adam Smith), Marx famously dismissed as "Robinsonades" (after Robinson Crusoe), for they began their analysis with the notion of a rational isolated individual, detached from social bonds, and assumed that this was a reflection of human nature.

In terms of contemporary social theory, Marx rejected both "sociological collectivism" (or holism, mystical or otherwise) and methodological individualism (Popper and rational choice theorists).

3. History

Many scholars have stressed that Marx viewed the human subject as a dialectical unity, as intrinsically and simultaneously both a natural and a social being. But as a revolutionary socialist Marx also emphasized that all humans have a unique personal identity—a sense of self with moral and social agency. And he was centrally concerned not with autonomy, but rather with social freedom, and the self-expression of the human individual. Marx thus expressed an understanding of the human subject in terms of a triadic ontology.

To illustrate this, we may turn to the American anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn, the engaging ethnographer of the Navaho. Kluckhohn once suggested that there were three distinctive ways of conceiving the human person: namely, that in some respects every person is like every other human being—as a species-being; that they are like no other human being in having a unique personality (or self); and, finally, that they have affinities with some other humans in being social and cultural beings. These three aspects of the human subject are an essential expression of the fact that humans are always embedded in three historical processes: namely, the *phylogenetic*, pertaining to the evolution of humans as a species-being (humanity); the *ontogenetic,* which relates to the individual as a unique, embodied and psychological being (self); and, finally, the *sociohistorical*, which situates the human individual as a person, in a specific historical and ecological context.

Like Kant and Marcel Mauss, Marx therefore always recognized that the human being had, always and simultaneously, three distinct "natures": as a species-being, a human nature (or identity) with essential needs, powers, capacities, and a history; as a "communal being" or "an ensemble of social relations" (as Marx put it), a person who enacted specific social roles and expressed certain social identities; and, finally, as an individual being, a self with a unique personality and subjective and moral agency. Marx was a humanist, in that he always emphasized the "individuality" of the human person, and the fundamental importance of human freedom, viewed in terms of the self-determination and the self-expression of the individual. But like the social anarchists, Marx recognized and stressed that such freedom could only be achieved by the creation, through collective practice and struggle, of a truly socialist society, for humans were fundamentally social beings. Freedom, for Marx, was social not metaphysical.

4. Science

Within the Marxist tradition there has long been an ongoing debate, and at times harsh polemical exchanges, between two contrasting interpretations of Marx.

On the one hand, there are those who are usually described as critical theorists or Hegelian Marxists, who stress the continuity between Marx and German philosophy, particularly that of Hegel. They focus on Marx's early writings on philosophical anthropology, situated themselves in the more literary and philosophical traditions of European culture, and adopt a more "historicist" and "humanistic" interpretation of Marx. The emphasis is on "dialectics", "humanism" and history, and they often express an aversion to science. A classic example is Erich Fromm, who described Marx as an existentialist humanist, centrally concerned with human dignity and freedom.

On the other hand, there are those Marxists who focus on Marx's later writings particularly his profound analysis of modern capitalism *Das Capital* (1867), which is essentially a work of empirical anthropology, replete with a welter of ethnographic data on industrial production and human life under capitalism. Such Marxists suggest that Marx made a clean break with Hegel's historicist philosophy, along with dialectics, and had pioneered a new scientific way of understanding human history. Louis Althusser is a key exemplar of the tendency to interpret Marx's anthropology as a "science of history". But in being stridently "anti-humanist" and derisory towards history, Althusser tended to express a rather abstract and synchronic form of scientific understanding.

What many scholars have suggested, however, is that Marx's anthropology is best understood as a unique attempt to establish a dialectical social science. Marx thus envisaged anthropology as an historical science; one that would combine dialectics and science, historicism (humanism) and materialism (naturalism). It involved a rejection of both cultural idealism and positivism and all forms of reductive materialism. As Marx put it: "the abstract materialism of a natural science that excludes the historical process is defective" (1967: p. 393), for the only viable approach to the understanding of social life is one that is both materialist and historical. Such scientific understanding, therefore, involves going beyond phenomenological description by exploring—explaining—how social and cultural phenomena "came into being". The anthropologist Franz Boas put this succinctly:

"To understand a phenomenon we have to know not only what it is, but also how it came into being. Our problem is historical" (1940: p. 305).

Marx's anthropology can therefore be described in summary as at once dialectical, historical, materialist and scientific, as well as reflecting the "critical spirit" of the Enlightenment.

Marx, of course, was primarily interested in economics and political theory, and is mainly known for writing the famous *Communist manifesto* (1848) (along with Engels), and for his substantial economic treatise *Das Capital*. But

it has to be recognized that Marx was a world-historical thinker. As a political journalist he wrote extensively on India and colonialism. Always fascinated by the diversity of human societies, both in the past and in his own time, Marx became deeply involved in studying pre-capitalist modes of production—communal (tribal societies), ancient (the classical civilizations of Greece and Rome), Germanic, Asiatic, Slavonic (specifically Russian serfdom) and European feudalism. These formed the socio-historical context with regard to the emergence and the expansion of the capitalist world economy.

While in his last years Marx filled several notebooks—the ethnological notebooks—with observations and reflections on diverse anthropological topics, ranging from "primitive communism" to the family and gender in the Roman Empire—notes derived from extensive reading. Marx was particularly interested in the work of the pioneer American anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan who wrote ground-breaking studies on the Iroquois, on kinship systems, and on sociocultural evolution. Morgan's *Ancient Society* (1877) was a landmark text in the development of anthropology. Significantly, Engels' seminal study *The Origins of the Family, private property and the state* (1884) is largely based on Morgan's work and on Marx's own notebooks.

Although Marx is invariably interpreted as a social evolutionist, who, like Morgan and Edward Tylor, viewed human history in terms of rigid unilinear "stages", it is evident, as Patterson contends, that Marx had a much more complex conception of human history, one that implied multilineal "pathways" (2009: p. 105).

Though an exemplary and pioneer anthropologist, Marx continues to be dismissed by contemporary liberal scholars as an intellectual "relic", and held responsible for the authoritarian politics and tyranny of the Soviet Union under Stalin, and the Chinese state under Mao Zedong. Both, of course, were forms of state capitalism under a party dictatorship, and far removed from Marx's own embrace of democratic politics and his conception of a communist society.

Perhaps, as a last word, we can quote from the pragmatist philosopher Sidney Hook, before he became an apologist for the American Empire. He wrote:

"Marx was a democratic socialist, a secular humanist, and a fighter for human freedom. His words and actions breathe a commitment to a way of life and a critical independence completely at odds with the absolute rule of the one-party dictatorship of the Soviet Union" (1971: p. 2).

Marx was also an anthropologist and the advocate of anthropology as a humanistic science.

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■ IN DEFENCE OF THE COMMONS

Originally published in *Freedom* (2014)

Nature for Sale: The Commons Versus Commodities
Giovanna Ricoveri, (London: Pluto Press, 2013)

This book has been described as a "powerful tool" to help us to understand the capitalist system, and to mobilize resistance and find alternatives to the present destructive economic order. It aims at the recovery, the restoration, and the re-invention of the commons, which is seen as vital to both our freedoms and to our very survival. This means—the message of the book—that we need to go back to the "self-organized management of natural resources by local communities" (p. 95). Written by the Italian economist Giovanna Ricoveri, the book is essentially a neo-Marxist text. It is part of a project aimed at the "greening of Marxism", that was initiated some years ago in the writings of Ted Benton, James O'Connor and Mary Mellor.

It is a thoroughly worthwhile book, comparatively short, readable and engaging, and offers an excellent defence and advocacy of the "commons" as an alternative way of organizing social and economic life. The entire book hinges around the dichotomy of the "commons" versus the "commodities"—the underlying logic of industrial capitalism. Apart from a brief mention of Murray Bookchin, Ricoveri, in typical Marxist fashion, makes no mention at all of anarchism, while simply recapitulating and re-affirming what anarchist-communists have been advocating for the past hundred years or more.

The book consists of four short chapters.

The first chapter outlines "what are the commons". The commons, of course, are all the aspects of the natural world—land, water, air, forests, animals—and all the ecological services that nature provides gratis. In essence these belong to no one and everyone, and all people, therefore, should only have usufruct right to such natural resources. The commons provide us with all that is essential for subsistence—food, water, and shelter. Unlike the so-called post-anarchists, Ricoveri emphasizes the fact that "we all depend on nature" (p. 46).

The notion of the "commons" is, of course, intrinsically related to that of community, which is any group of people who together manage an area of land, together with its natural resources. The community, she writes, is the name given to the "collective body that self-governs the commons" (p. 52). Ricoveri emphasizes the fact that the dynamic process of natural ecosystems in essence sustains the commons, and she makes some cogent criticisms of Garrett Hardin's famous essay on "the tragedy of the commons". In this she simply echoes what Maria Mies wrote more than a decade ago, for Mies, in her advocacy of a "subsistence perspective" also stressed the need for "reinventing the commons". But, as with the anarchists, Mies hardly gets a mention in the text.

The second chapter is focussed on the "decline of the commons" and emphasizes the historical processes and the various ideologies that have led to

the undermining of subsistence economies and to a decline in the culture of the commons. These include: the industrial revolution, European colonialism, the mechanistic conception of nature depicted by Bacon and Descartes, and the ideology of possessive individualism associated with Hobbes and many economists—which portrays the human individual as "ruled by competition, aggressiveness and egoism" (p. 63). This is a succinct and engaging discussion, and Ricoveri highlights the work of two scholars who are still, I think, well worth reading—Karl Polanyi and Carolyn Merchant.

The third chapter focuses on the present crisis of capitalism and what Ricoveri describes as the "new enclosures of the commons"—the negative impact of the so-called "structural adjustment programmes", the privatization of land, water and public space, the biopiracy involved in the implementation of "intellectual property rights", and the kind of neo-colonialism that is being promoted worldwide under the guise of "development" by technocratic "experts".

All this is a thoroughly worthwhile discussion, complemented in the introduction by a short account of the varied social and ecological movements which, throughout the world, have been defending the "culture of the commons" against the onslaught and intrusions of global capitalism, aided and abetted (of courses) by modern states. It is a culture that emphasizes social and environmental justice, the common ownership of land and natural resources, cooperative organizations based on mutual aid and self-management through direct or participatory democracy, the sustainable use of natural resources, and what Ricoveri describes, following Vandana Shiva as "earth democracy". All of this, of course, simply echoes what libertarian socialists have long been describing as "anarchist communism".

But when Ricoveri comes in the last chapter to promote "All power to the commons!" she completely back-tracks. For she contends that by emphasizing the culture of the "commons" we can "return legitimacy to the state" (p. 91). As a typical reformist Marxist she wants to restore the "sovereignty of the state" (p. 54), so that it can offer a "certain amount of protectionism" (p. 66) against the corruption, inequalities and ecological degradation engendered by the market economy (capitalism) and thus be an "honest broker" (no less!) "between business and citizens" (p. 100). The nation-state, which Ricoveri so ardently supports, has never been, and never will be, an "honest broker" for it has always undermined the power of local communities and the "culture of the commons". As Kropotkin and the social anarchists always insisted the raison d'etre of the modern state has always been to support and defend the interests of capital—the capitalist market economy and the logic of "commodities". There is no reformist middle way between the culture of the "commons" (eco-anarchism) and that of commodities" (market capitalism).

■ THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF ANARCHIST SOLIDARITY

Originally published in *Anarchist Studies* (2014)

Anarchic Solidarity: Anatomy, Equality and Fellowship in Southeast Asia
Thomas Gibson and Kenneth Sillander (eds)
(New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011)

Ever since Tony Blair discovered that anarchists were at the heart of the anti-capitalist movements and protests, during the first decade of the present century, "anarchism" has become a "buzzword", an iconic concept both in the media and among university academics. We have, therefore, seen the outpouring of a plethora of books on anarchism. We may, for example, note the following: books on so-called "Tory" anarchists; academic philosophers trying to convince us that reactionaries such as Nietzsche and Heidegger were really anarchists; political scientists, after dismissing or ignoring anarchism for several decades, now holding international academic conferences to discuss and publish works on post-anarchist politics; Marxists like John Holloway filching anarchist ideas with little or no acknowledgement in order to create some allegedly "new" genre of politics; religious devotees using anarchism as a cover in order to propagate their own version of religious mysticism—whether esotericism (Paul Cudenec) or mystical Islam (Hakim Bey); and, finally, we now have anthropologists beginning to take anarchism seriously.

Amongst all this welter of literature it is often difficult to separate the "wheat"—scholarly or otherwise—from all the academic and media "chaff".

This present book on "Anarchic Solidarity" is pure wheat, and will provide all anarchists with intellectual nourishment. It is a real gem of a book. It is also a good antidote to all those "postmodernists" who are currently peddling the view (usually with great academic pretension) that since humans have invented electronic computers (and cyberspace!) humans have ceased to exist, and that we are now experiencing an "end of anthropology"—as a recent book titled *Human No More* puts it. This book on "Anarchic Solidarity" will indicate that humans, as living species-beings, are still around, and that anthropology continues to be alive and flourishing as a scholarly pursuit.

The evolutionary anthropologist Chris Knight has long been insisting that anarchism is not some utopian dream, but that anarchy or "primitive communism" was the characteristic form of social organization among early humans; that is, after the human revolution that occurred between 100 and 40 thousand years ago. This revolution saw the development among humans of language, the arts, and symbolic forms of social life based on mutual aid and cooperation. It was a "creative explosion" as one scholar long ago put it (John Pfeiffer). Human social life is therefore possible without any institutional forms of hierarchy, without any economic classes, as well as without any coercive states or structures of domination. Industrial capitalism, of course, in terms of human history, is a comparatively recent phenomenon.

The present book is not about early human society: it is on the patterns of social life among contemporary tribal societies who live in the forested regions of Southeast Asia. Most of these societies are hunter-gatherers, swidden cultivators or collectors of forest products for trade. The book itself is a collection of sensitive ethnographic portraits of such people as the Batak, Semai, and Chewong of the Malay peninsula; the Bentian, Punan and Sama Dilaut of Borneo—the last being a fishing community; and the Palawan, Cuyonon and Buid of the Philippines. Many of the contributors to the book are well-known anthropologists, scholars such as Signe Howell, Kirk Endicott, Robert Dentan and Charles MacDonald having spent several decades undertaking ethnographic researches in the region. In fact, I read Dentan's classic study "*The Semai: A Non-Violent People of Malaysia*" (1968) when I was a student novitiate in anthropology at the L.S.E. in the early 1970s.

Unlike James Scott's seminal work "*The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*" this book is not a historical work, but, as said, consists of a collection of ethnographic essays.

The book is specifically on the *social life* of these swidden cultivators/hunter-gatherers. There is, therefore, little about their history, their economic life, their religious cosmologies (apart from Howell's essay on the Chewong), and on their relationship with the wider society—specifically the capitalist market economy and the various East Asian states. Even so, the encapsulation of the Punan into the wider Borneo society is cogently explored by Lars Kaskija. Accepting this focus on "sociality" (otherwise known as social relations) all the essays in the collection are excellent—readable and free from academic jargon; informative, engaging, often illuminating, and, as earlier indicated, based on detailed ethnographic research, often extending over many years.

What these essay indicate is that the tribal peoples of Southeast Asia share three interrelated socio-cultural features that find an echo, in fact, in the rallying cry of the French Revolution—liberty, equality and fraternity (social solidarity). All the essays, in one way or another, emphasize these three cultural attributes or normative values. They are the following:

Firstly, a fundamental emphasis is placed among these societies on the autonomy of the human individual, which is something that is fostered during a child's early years, and highly valued and affirmed. The individuality and social agency of the human person is thus recognized and upheld.

Secondly, such tribal people express and sustain a highly *egalitarian* ethos, gender equality is the norm, and they are opposed to any form of coercion or hierarchy. There are thus diffuse sanctions against any accumulation of wealth or political power. This does not imply however, however, that such tribal people "do pretty much as they please" as one contributor puts it (p. 19), or live in a state of anomie, without any social organizations or group structure (see below).

Thirdly, fundamental emphasis is placed on "Social Solidarity" expressed in the mutual aid and co-operation that takes place between individuals and households, the high value placed on sharing, and the importance of kinship

relations in these tribal communities. But this is often coupled with a high degree of nomadic movement, and highly flexible patterns of social aggregation. Although a commitment to nonviolence is often a major aspect of the ideology of many of these communities—such as the Semai and Chewong—it is by no means universal among these tribunal people.

All this, of course, resonates with the seminal writings of James Woodburn on the economic systems of hunter-gatherers, Richard Lee's depiction of primitive communism as a foraging mode of production, and Alan Barnard's definition of a hunter-gathering mode of thought—all of which are mentioned, if only too briefly, in the present text.

What is important about the book, however, is that it emphasizes that egalitarianism, the autonomy of the individual, and the stress on mutual aid and co-operation (social solidarity) are "mutually reinforcing ethical values" (p. 30).

Interestingly reference is often made to Marilyn Strathern's rather facile, exotic dualism between so-called Western culture, which recognizes people only as individuals and as part of a "society", and Melanesian culture which, in contrast, allegedly recognizes people as "dividuals" not as individuals, and who engage only in "sociality". This crude analysis is well critiqued in the text—especially by Thomas Gibson—for the tribal people of Southeast Asia put a fundamental emphasis on the autonomy of the *individual* person! This kind of individualism, of course, as Elman Service stressed over forty years ago—in his book on *The Hunters* (1966)—is very different from the rugged and possessive individualism of Ayn Rand and laissez-faire capitalism. It hardly needs saying that Western people, like people everywhere else in the world, are social beings —"dividuals"!—enacting a multiplicity of social roles (relations) and identities.

Strathern's crude analysis is invariably linked with a related idea, namely, the hunter-gatherers, and tribal people generally, do not live in groups or societies. Apparently, they only have "sociality", given that a society is perversely defined, by such scholars, in terms of corporate groups (which many hunter-gatherers lack) and hierarchical relations of domination (which they also lack). This notion—that the forest people of Southeast Asia (and elsewhere) not live in societies—is quite facile and is critiqued by many of the contributors in this collection. Needless to say, even hyenas and badgers do not simply have "sociality" (relations) but actually live in organized clans!

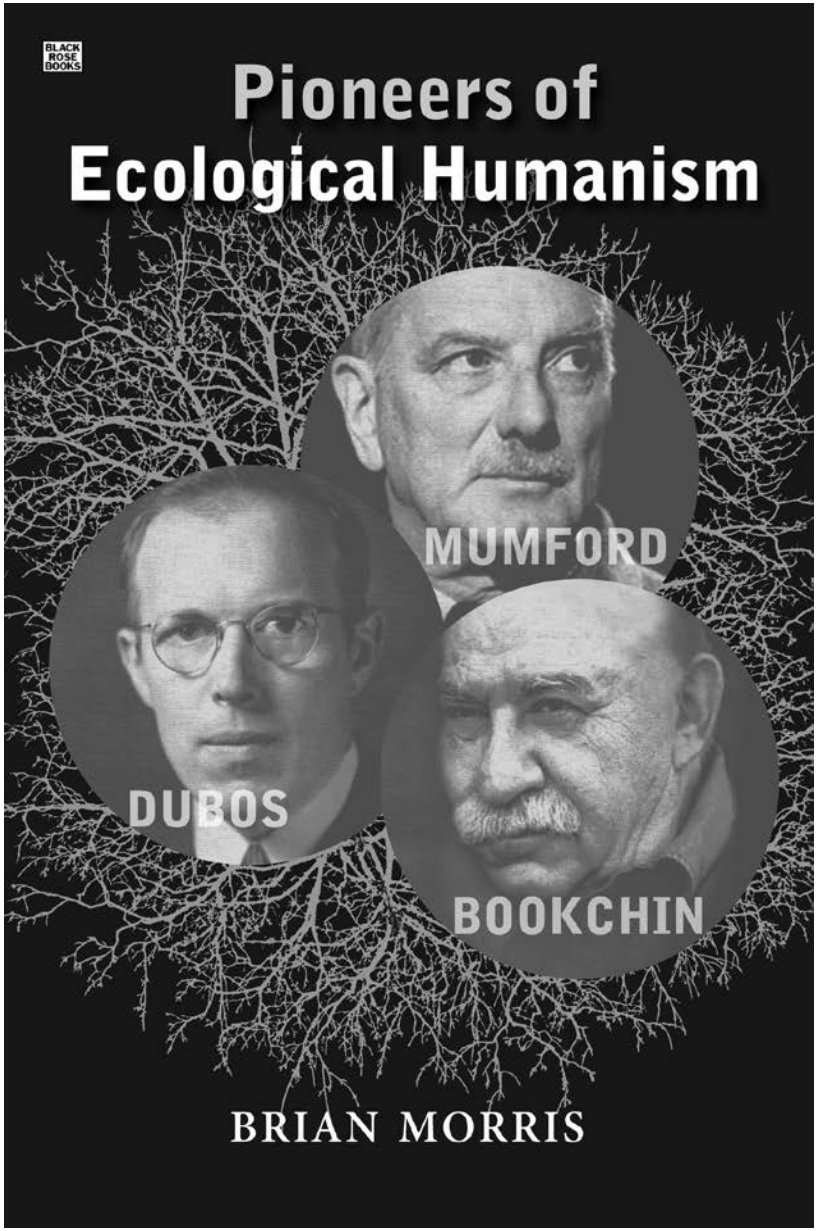
Although allusions are made to anarchism in the text, as with Scott's book, there is no real engagement with anarchist writings, apart from a brief mention of Benedict Anderson's reflections on anarchism in the Philippines (p. 10) and what the editors Thomas Gibson and Kenneth Silander do have to say about anarchism is somewhat misleading. Linking Marxism with the industrial proletariat, and following Anderson and many Marxists, anarchists are falsely identified with "peasants, agricultural workers and bohemian intellectuals" (p. 8). But as Lucien Van de Walt and Michael Schmidt have indicated in their impressive history of anarchism *Black Flame*, anarchism was a worldwide movement that involved both industrial workers and peasants, and was never completely

"marginalized". There seems to be the impression among many writers on anarchism, that anarchism went into hibernation in the early years of the twentieth century, only to re-emerge at the end of the century with the demonstrations in Seattle! Revolutionary anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists have, however, always been around. Anarchy Alive! It never actually died! (see for example, Schmidt's *Cartography of Revolutionary Anarchism* (2013) for the various "waves" of anarchist "counter-power" throughout the twentieth century).

It is also misleading to view "anarchic solidarity" as existing only among tribal peoples or in the utopian dreams of European intellectuals (p. 10) for as Peter Kropotkin emphasized long ago, anarchic social relations exist as a part of all human societies and throughout history. As far as contemporary Western societies are concerned, this is well-exemplified by Colin Ward's *Anarchy in Action* and John Curl's hidden history of co-operative movements and communalism in the United States.

Rather surprisingly contributors to this volume seem blissfully unaware that Harold Barclay and myself, along with Peter Gardner—all committed to anarchist politics—have been exploring the links between anarchism as a political tradition and anthropology specifically with regard to the study of hunter-gatherers and kin-based societies, for over thirty years. Thus long ago Barclay wrote a seminal study *People Without Government* (1982), subtitled "the anthropology of anarchism", and since then has written numerous reflective essay on culture and anarchism. That same year I published by ethnographic study *Forest Traders*—an account of the socio-economic life of the Malaipantaram, a foraging community of South India. In that book I discussed at length their "anarchic solidarity"—their emphasis on individual autonomy, their egalitarian ethos and gender equality, their patterns of sharing and mutual aid, their flexible social organization, and their diverse economic strategies. A decade before Nurit Bird-David I also stressed, drawing on the seminal writings of Richard Fox and Peter Gardner, their encapsulation within a wider mercantile capitalist economy, while emphasizing also—like James Scott—the various ways in which the Malaipantaram retained their social autonomy and cultural integrity. Subsequently I wrote an essay (1998) suggesting that there was a kind of "elective affinity" between anthropology and anarchism, and highlighted that not only Pierre Clastre, but anarchists like Peter Kropotkin, Murray Bookchin and John Zerzan all wrote insightfully on the "anarchic solidarity" of tribal societies. My study of Kropotkin (2004) includes a chapter specifically on the "tribal life and anarchism". Peter Gardner penned a seminal paper on "Foragers' Pursuit of Individual Autonomy" (1991) and his pioneering ethnographic study of the Paliyans of South India includes a chapter entitled "Respect, Equality and Peaceful Anarchy".

Given their limited focus on tribal peoples of Southeast Asia all this, of course, is completely lost on the contributors to this volume. But such reflections in no way detract from the value and importance of this excellent study of "anarchic solidarity" among the forest peoples of Southeast Asia. The book is, therefore, warmly recommended to anarchists and anthropologists alike.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